

COUNTRY LIFE

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Photo. by J. THOMSON

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FOR the first time in the history of North America, the fur-bearing animals are showing a recovery in numbers.

Gold, more precious than the precious sable, has for the moment attracted all the energy formerly devoted for centuries to the trapping of furs, since Canada took the beaver for its crest, or Charles II. gave to the Hudson's Bay Company the monopoly of the richest fur country in the world, in exchange for "two white elks annually and two black beavers." Even the Indian finds it pays him better to carry "picks" upon his back to the mines than to devote his time to trapping for the Company. He is not only losing his health and strength by

In proof of this, let me cite my own experiences of the trapper's life in the North-West. One bright spring morning, when the sun was already powerful enough to melt the snow, found the writer, his wife, and a boy servant, with several Indians carrying packs, crossing the summit of the Babrin Mountain, northward bound for the Peace River. We were plunging through snow, ice, and water; but, in spite of the chilly obstacles before us, we were all overjoyed at the prospect of leaving for ever our late winter quarters, to which, owing to the avowed hostility of the never too amiable Indians, we had been forced to retreat from the country which we had entered in the previous



A COMFORTABLE LOG HUT.

converting himself into a beast of burden, but his hunter's cunning as well. Consequently, in the distant and thinly-peopled regions of the North, the hinterland of British Columbia, and the upper waters of the Peace and Fraser Rivers, wild animals are actually increasing, and the adventure of an autumn and winter's trapping may give a return of valuable and beautiful furs comparable to those obtained in the old days. The trapper must push, haul, paddle, or drag his canoe for perhaps a thousand miles up the Peace or Fraser River. But he can generally hire Indian help, the scenery is splendid, the climate not unpleasing, and the excitement of the trapper's work, his free life in his northern hut, and his trophies of beautiful and costly fur, are no small return for his adventure

autumn for winter trapping. After a wretched eight months, harassed and annoyed on all sides, our spirits rose as we found ourselves once more on the trail. The Indians of Peace River bear a good reputation, fur-bearing animals of most kinds were reported as abundant, and food in the shape of fish and game was likely to be plentiful. On the first part of our journey fish, of excellent quality, but fish alone, was our sole fare; and the lady of the party, who had undertaken the practical duties of cook, had to make the best of material, which consisted solely of different kinds of trout. After descending Babrin Mountain, we spent several enjoyable weeks ALONE WITH OUR DOGS in traversing the hundred miles of water known as Babrin Lake, subsisting entirely upon the various kinds of trout which are

always abundant in the inlets, the outlets, or the main river.

Beautiful three-pounders, rising freely to the fly, form innumerable great circles on the waters as they gulp down helpless grasshoppers; while great black lake trout, of eighteen to twenty pounds and upwards, are equally greedy after a spoon-bait on a deep-sea hand-line. From Babrin Lake to Stuart's Lake is but a few miles, and from the end of the latter, where stands the Hudson's Bay Company's last post, we hoped to make our start for our trapping ground on Peace River. We lost no time in traversing Stuart's Lake, where the Indian squaws were deeply interested in the first white woman they had ever seen, and where, during the night we spent beside the trail, we appeared to be surrounded by grizzlies, to judge from the calf-like bellowing they maintained all night.

At the Hudson's Bay post we found that we must alter our plans. By no means could we procure Indians to carry our packs to the Finlay River, from which lay our route to our intended headquarters on the Peace River, so we determined to make for the head-waters of the Fraser River, *via* the Stuart River, which flows out of Stuart's Lake. We secured a bad Indian crew, and spent an easy day, lazily paddling down the river, though ever on the alert for the warning sound of rapids, which need all the crew's strength to navigate. Towards evening, on turning a sharp corner, we came suddenly on a black bear cub. It was a particularly welcome sight, not so much on account of the pelt, which at this time of the year has little value, but in anticipation of some fresh meat, which would be very acceptable after the surfeit of fish that we had had for so long. I seized my rifle, and a quick pot-shot caused the guileless cub, who had been greedily searching for dainties in the mud, to turn suddenly over on to its back, wildly beating the air with its dirty little paws. That night we supped sumptuously off bear's heart and liver. After fixing up our tent, for the Indians would do



ALONE WITH OUR DOGS.

little to help us, we turned in, and slept till dawn. Late next day the canoe shot out into the mighty Fraser River, noted for its deadly cañons and rapids, but just here and for miles above as placid as the Thames.

Fortunately for us, we were able to secure a change of crews at an Indian village that we passed. No longer drifting down the stream, but stemming the current with steady sweeps of the paddles, the boat toiled ahead.

Day after day, forging northwards, we pushed vigorously on. There was, however, nothing of monotony for us. Our trained eyes took in every sign as we passed. Here a creek, with short pieces of bark-stripped willow floating down the stream, gave clear evidence of beavers at work above. There the deep track of a foot told, by its long nail marks embedded in the soft mud, of the presence of some great grizzly hard by. In one instance we noticed that the bear had but lately passed along, for water was still steadily soaking into the foot-prints.

Just then we were not looking for bears, for their skins were not in condition. This was a pity, for there were signs of bear in plenty by the river bank. They are attracted to the shores of the Fraser River by the abundance of salmon, and especially of spent fish, which can be had on the banks. Every few yards the remains of a monster "kelt" lay rotting in the sun, showing that the bears had been making a meal of fish, until the berries which they prefer should ripen to provide them with dessert before hibernating. As we travelled steadily towards the head-waters of the great river, animal life of all kinds increased. Canada geese, returning from their Arctic breeding grounds appeared in flocks in the numerous lagoons on either side of the river, supplying a pleasant change of diet. Great sturgeon of fully toolb. weight, basking in the shallows, shot under the canoe into deep water. Sage-looking white-headed fish-eagles, perched on trees, allowed us to approach within 50yds. of



BRINGING HOME VENISON.

them. Then in the distance there were signs that our water-way would presently be closed. In a few days lofty mountains loomed in the distance, and the river banks became more and more precipitous. Then followed the usual physical obstacles in great rivers at their points of exit from their parent mountains. Rapids and rocks were frequent, and the canoe had to be hauled by rollers over the rugged summits of transverse ridges, which, though worn and pierced by the waters, still barred the passage by rocks and rapids. Nature itself seemed to indicate this as the limit of our journey, and the proper spot to set up our house in the wilderness. The site we chose for our home during the autumn and early months of winter in the North-West was on the western bank of the Fraser, at a spot surrounded with dead timber. Here, with the help of the Indians, we built A COMFORTABLE LOG HUT. A heavy fall of snow had taken place, and the weather was bitterly cold; but as yet beaver was the only fur in condition for trapping. Nothing else would be at its best before November. I was not long before I discovered one of the beaver colonies once common all round the great lakes, but now banished to the far North-West.

Having cut a quantity of firewood, with the boy's assistance, and arranged it in cords conveniently near the shanty, I one day shouldered my rifle and sallied forth through the small low-lying firs, whose branches were bedecked with long streamers of cariboo moss. The soft and yielding ground, freely dotted with cranberries, betokened the likelihood of some beaver dam being near at hand. In the course of a couple of hours' wandering an open sheet of water glistened between the dense willows surrounding

it. From former experience I knew that I had struck a lake well stocked with beavers. Their work was apparent on every side—even fir trees had been partially gnawed through; but finding them too unpleasant to the taste, the busy workmen had left them still standing. All about the lake, far out into the centre, and along the sides, were dotted their dome-shaped houses. These, by their perfectly smooth appearance, were evidently inhabited. On a forsaken house, the willows of which it was partially constructed would have taken root and shot high into the air, as is often seen on deserted beaver dams. The banks here were deeply furrowed from constant work, while clambering in and out of the water, and at every entrance a beaver might be trapped.

Cutting about a dozen supple willows for constructing stretching frames, I returned home well pleased with the discovery. Next morning, armed with eight great double-sprung beaver traps, I returned to the lake, where I spent three hours cutting sliding poles, selecting dead wood so that the beavers should not gnaw them off, and thereto fixing the traps in such a position as to drown the animals on taking their first plunge after being trapped.

The eight traps were secreted beneath water unbaited, and all taint being carefully washed from the adjacent land and poles, I returned to spend the remainder of the day cutting and bending willows into hoops whereon to stretch and dry the almost circular pelts.

Next morning seven traps held a beaver each, and the eighth a useless musk rat. The size of some of these beavers would have quickened the pulse of even the most hardened trapper's

heart, for they were veterans of 60lb. in weight, contrasting well with the wretched 25lb. three-legged beavers of trapped out districts. From this it was clear I had struck a virgin dam, to which I devoted my entire attention, until the total catch reached forty-two head, when neither cunning nor beaver medicine—an extraction from the glands—could induce the animals who had so far given a wide berth to the traps to get caught.

In the interval of autumn, between my successful campaign against the beavers and the opening of the serious business of trapping, I occasionally shot a bear when out for an evening's scramble among the logs and boulders on the river bank. One afternoon I came suddenly upon one of the largest grizzlies I had ever seen, ASLEEP WITH ITS HEAD ON A LOG, after feasting on the remains of a cariboo I had shot a few days before.



ASLEEP WITH ITS HEAD ON A LOG.

BOOKS OF THE DAY.

HOW comes it that a new novel by no less a person than the author of "Lorna Doone," and issuing from the important house of Messrs. Blackwood, has not been reviewed in these columns almost immediately upon publication? The truth of the matter is that "Dariel," by R. D. Blackmore, is, after a while, tiresome reading. The opening is delicious, and instinct with the fragrance of that rural England in the description of which, be the county Devon or Surrey, or what you will, Mr. Blackmore has few rivals, and no master save Mr. Thomas Hardy. The early chapters will touch a sympathetic string in the hearts of those who know, as sufferers in person or as eye-witnesses, how severe has been the struggle which the landowning classes have endured in these days of free trade and national prosperity and agricultural ruin. Our friend George Cranleigh is the son of a Surrey baronet, and the task which he is called upon to perform is that which has fallen to the lot of a greater number of promising young gentlemen than one cares to contemplate. "We were not, as we used to be, people of wealth and large estates, and such as the world looks up to; but sadly reduced and crippled, and hard pushed to make a living. And the burden of this task had fallen most heavily upon me, because I was the only son at home, and my father's mind was much too large to be cramped with petty troubles. So that when he had been deprived of nine-tenths of his property, and could not procure any tenants for the rest, it became my duty to work the best of the land that still remained, and make both ends meet if possible." Of such a theme alone a writer of Mr. Blackmore's power, and endowed with his sympathetic appreciation of the beauties of Nature, could at any time make a pleasant book. On the other hand, it must be confessed that Mr. Blackmore's graceful and polished style, admirably suited as it was to the narrator of "Lorna Doone," seems a trifle unnatural from the lips of a young squire recalled from Oxford by *res angustia domi*, and compelled to farm the remnant of the ancestral acres. George Cranleigh heard a maiden singing, "It was not the voice of a bird this time, but a sound that made my heart beat fast, and then held me in rapture of wonder. Dew of

the morning in a moss rose-bud, crystal drops beading a frond of fern, lustre of a fountain in full moonlight—none of these seem to me fit to compare with the limpid beauty of that voice. And, more than the sweetest sounds can do, that indite of things beyond us, and fall from a sphere where no man dwells, this voice came home to my heart, and filled it with a vivid sorrow and a vague delight." Now this is very beautiful language, and when the narrative is put into the mouth of a man of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, it seems not only natural but delightful that he should talk on this wise. But the barbarians, as Matthew Arnold acutely describes the young men and women of the upper classes, distinctly do not use this pretty fashion of talk, and, to be candid, it sounds unnatural to them. But for the rest I have nothing but praise for the Surrey scenes; nothing but admiration for those clever character studies in the pages in which Harold, the "gentle, handsome, generous," elder brother, full of designs and inventions which are to revolutionise the world and re-establish the family, but so hopelessly impractical and expensive as to be "a trouble almost as bad as mortgages, loss of invested money, and even the ruinous price of corn," stands living before our eyes. "A genius in the family and no cash to support him"—there is a world of irony and a wealth of pathos in the phrase. Jackson Stoneman, the rich stockbroker, who takes Cranleigh Hall and falls in love with sweet Grace Cranleigh, and Robert Slemmick, the "black buster"—you must refer to the *Lox* to see what that means—are all drawn with skill, and with power, and in human lines. How comes it, then, that a book possessed of so many delightful features can come to weary even the stupidest of reviewers? The answer, which may be found in a good many novels of the day, is that we are confronted with an Eastern Prince in disguise. This time he is called Sür Imar, and his daughter is Dariel. So long as Mr. Blackmore keeps his characters in Surrey, things go well enough. Sür Imar's august dignity, his accomplishments, his "admirability," so to speak, cause something approaching to a feeling of satiety; and the entirely unprovoked raid made upon his printing press by the Surrey police verges on the ridiculous.

But the reader does not lose the feeling of self-indulgence as he turns the pages or feel compelled to make call upon his reserve fund of industry in reading, until Sir Inar tells the story of his life and love. A second narrative of this kind incorporated in a first is, the Second *Aeneid* notwithstanding, almost always an artistic mistake; and Sir Inar's story is no exception to the rule. Nor are the adventures of Cranleigh among the wild tribes of the Caucasus to my liking. Perhaps I may express my opinion of the book best by describing the conduct it is my intention to adopt towards it. All my books are friends. I shall turn to the first half of "Dariel" often when fogs are thick and London depresses and I want a breath of fresh air and country scenery and a talk with manly George Cranleigh. But I shall never read Sir Inar's story again or take Mr. Blackmore for guide to the Caucasus.

"This is an age of revivals, and I venture to claim for this memorial, that it is a new move towards strengthening, indeed rehabilitating, Wellington in the esteem of his fellow-countrymen." So writes Major Arthur Griffiths in the preface of "The Wellington Memorial" (George Allen). It is surely quite consistent to add to a word of cordial welcome to this lucid and straightforward book an angry protest that to speak of rehabilitating the Iron Duke in the esteem of his fellow-countrymen is to insult the vast majority of honest Englishmen. There are little-minded critics, no doubt, who carp at the story of his life, but they are of no account. None the less, Major Griffiths does give us in these pages a useful account of the great man who crushed Napoleon, and does enable us to appreciate the solid worth of his character. Not the least noteworthy feature of the book is its wealth of portraits, exquisitely reproduced, from originals by Lawrence, Hoppner, Gambardella, Shee, Count D'Orsay, Hayter, and others. It is pleasant to meet in the same gallery with the great Duke Sir John Moore, General Alava, Soult, Lord Anglesey, Picton, Seaton, Raglan, Lord Londonderry, Lord Combermere, Lord Hill, Lord Beresford, Robert Crauford, and others. Curiously interesting is it a so to notice the extraordinary similarity of face between the Duke and his cold, hard mother, Lady Mornington, who wasted no love upon him, and pronounced him the fool of the family and food for powder.

To possess a copy of "All About Animals" (George Newnes, Limited) is to have the Zoological Gardens, and more, in one's bookshelves. More than 200 large illustrations of mammals and birds and reptiles are here, and there is no word but "perfect" to apply to the manner in which they are reproduced. Of the photographs, which give to the book its principal charm, many have been taken by the famous naturalist and photographer, Mr. Gambier Bolton, and some simply bear the imprint of Messrs. Hudson and Kearns, who stand quite at the top of the tree as artistic printers. Turn to what page you may, you will find an excellent picture upon a large scale supported by a pithy, brightly-written, and informing paragraph. Lions, tigers—the tigers absolutely perfect—camels, elephants, Zebu oxen, water buffaloes, polar bears, sea lions, elands, tapirs—the most amusingly ugly of animals—flamingoes, hornbills, eagles, alligators, cassowaries, salute me as I turn over the pages, and in one and all the workmanship is admirable. In a word, this is a wonderful, useful, and fascinating volume, acceptable alike to the boy of ten or to the man of sixty.

Space may justly be found for a word of welcome for "Mary Tudor," by Richard Davey (Roxburghe Press). This is one of a series of essays on "Historical Women," which already includes Queen Victoria, and will include Elizabeth, Anne, and Mary II., as well as the present volume. Mr. Davey, whose amusing if somewhat diffuse book on the "Sultan and his Subjects" is fresh in memory, is anything rather than a dryasdust historian. Rather is he a refined gossip, untiring in research, and possessed of a fluent style, which he uses in the narration of quaint old facts which are as pleasantly interesting as they are intrinsically unimportant. Here, for example, he omits much that the historian proper has told a thousand times, and he tells us scores of things which, so to speak, illustrate history and make it live. Mary Tudor's memory will never be cherished by Englishmen, for the fires of Smithfield cannot be forgotten, and it is but little excuse that axe and the faggot were conceded in obedience to the wishes of Philip of Spain. Still, one likes to know the manner of woman that she was apart from persecution, and here Mr. Davey helps us by description of her person, and by delightful extracts from her diary at Hunsdon. We hear of a deep contralto voice, of deep hazel eyes, of a tip-tilted nose, a short but graceful and dignified figure. We find her learned and accomplished in no common degree, well versed in Greek and Latin, to say nothing of science and modern languages, a writer of religious compositions, one of which is described as "a very beautiful specimen of fervent piety and devotion," and expert in the use of the lute and the virginal. But the diary shows her best. Now she is losing six angels at cards—she played often and recklessly—now giving away alms with much generosity considering her exiguous allowance, now buying six bonnets from Lady Gresham, the wife of the famous Lord Mayor, at 22s. each, and so forth. Then we have extracts from the account books. Thus, on January 20th, 1537, just about 360 years ago to-day, "To one bringing pigs and eggs to her Grace, 5s.," and in February of the same year she buys satin at 7s. 2d. the yard, and "seven yards of St. James's worsted, at 16d. the yard, for Mary ap Rice," one of the Tudor's Welsh connections, no doubt. We can trace her very appetites. She was exceedingly fond of fish, apples, and cockles. Even Philip appears in a less gloomy light in these pages, and we find Lady Lisle congratulating him on being merry and sending to him, whom she calls the "Palgrave," a curious present of a "tooth-picker," through her husband. "I send it to him because when he was here I did see him use a pin to pick his teeth withall. And I pray you show him that it has been mine these seven years." Fond of dogs, too, was this strange woman, and of birds. A little spaniel, two Italian greyhounds, a white lark, were among her presents. Perhaps, too, since Lent is approaching, it may be useful to give the Royal menu of Philip and Mary on a *maigre* day. "Salt salmon, porpoise, fresh sturgeon, roast eels, perches, boiled crabs, buttered eggs, apples, and oatmeal, with twelve gallons of cream. The dessert consisted of scraped cheese with sugar, apples with caraways, pears with peascods, damsons, black and white wafers, fillberts; and for beverages, hippocras, six gallons." Little details of this kind serve to make history readable and intelligible.

Public School Cricket.—X. Cheltenham.



Photo. by P. Parsons,

THE CRICKET GROUND.

Cheltenham.

IN 1896 Cheltenham had a very fine Eleven indeed, and undoubtedly could have been beaten on their merits by no school team, with the possible exception of Uppingham. But last season they fell sadly from their high position, and have little to congratulate themselves upon except a brilliant victory over Clifton. This match will be referred to again, but it may be said now that no side which did not contain really good cricket talent could have won it in the way the Cheltonians did. This leads to the inference that there were good excuses to be made for some of the defeats which the Eleven received during the season, and it is found that such was the case. By far the best cricketer on the side was A. H. Du Boulay, the captain of the Eleven, but, owing to examinations, he could seldom play, and the same cause kept Skinner, Wyatt, and

Collins out of the field, while Luce was, owing to illness, prevented from playing for some time. The absence of these players was not only a great loss in itself, but prevented the Eleven from ever getting thoroughly together. Good individual cricketers there were in the team, but, taken as a side, the Cheltonians were not very strong, and Marlborough and Haileybury gained victories over them which were well deserved.

The batting failed sometimes, and at Lord's, against Haileybury, was distinctly weak, but what the team needed most was a good right-hand slow bowler; and when Du Boulay, Luce, and Wyatt were away, there was little sting in the school bowling. The fielding was good, and C. G. Collins was a very smart wicket-keeper, although he was at times rather uncertain. The record of the side was, three matches won, two drawn, and

five lost. R.A.C. Cirencester met with a defeat, the school Eleven, thanks to some brilliant hitting by F. Kershaw and G. F. Collett, winning by 56 runs and four wickets; but Kettle College, the "Incogs," and Liverpool proved too strong for their opponents, and the Cheltonians could scarcely have looked forward to their struggle with Clifton with unlimited confidence. That they won after having distinctly the worst of the first day's play is immensely to their credit. The victory was in a very great measure due to the splendid all-round cricket of Du Boulay and Luce. The former scored 37 and 80, and took nine wickets;

while Luce made 23 and 44 not out, and took four wickets. The totals of a most interesting match were: Cheltenham, 168 and 210; Clifton, 218 and 127. Although Cheltenham made the good scores of 236 and 254 against Marlborough, they did not prevent their opponents from gaining a splendid victory by nine wickets, and all the bowlers, except Du Boulay, were quite harmless. Luce again batted well, making 70 and 32, and G. F. Collett, in the second innings, played splendidly for his 126.

Against Clifton Club the Cheltonians had the best of the draw, Healing, a neat and patient batsman, playing well, and a creditable victory over Kensington Park hardly prepared anyone for the failure at Lord's. Although Haileybury were the better team, they were not so immeasurably superior as this match would indicate, and the Cheltenham Eleven were seen at their worst on this occasion.

Of the individual players, it has already been said that Du Boulay was the best. He had a batting average of 30, and took 34 wickets, at a cost of 17 runs per wicket. When Luce was able to play, his all-round cricket was of the utmost value to the side. He is now at Oxford, and should



Photo. Waite and Pettitt,

Cheltenham

Mr. A. H. DU BOULAY.

certainly not be lost sight of. Collett batted very well, and finished the season with an average of 32; while both Kershaw, whose average was 23, and Skinner were useful on several occasions. When Du Boulay was away, the team were captained by J. N. Bateman Champain, who, in addition to being a good batsman, proved that he had all the qualities necessary for a school captain. No less than five Champains have been in the Cheltenham Eleven during the last thirteen or fourteen years, and it is not too much to say that they have had a lot to do with the success of the school cricket. A Cheltenham Eleven without a Champain would be like a Gloucestershire Eleven without a Grace. Du Boulay will possibly be back again this year, and will have Champain, Kershaw, Collett, Turnbull, Wyatt, and Langley-Smith to support him. This is the nucleus of a very good side, and if examinations do not again interfere, the Cheltenham Eleven of 1898 may confidently be expected to improve very considerably on the records of 1897.

In conclusion, a few words may be said in commendation of the list of fixtures which the Cheltenham Eleven play. During the season they play three public school matches, one of which is played at Lord's after term is over, and they also play powerful opponents in the "Incogs" and Liverpool Club. With such excellent opportunities for testing their nerve, and such a keen professional as Woolf to look after them, it is no wonder that the Cheltenham Elevens have of late been very good. And consequently the disappointments of the last season have been a little irritating to those who are interested in the school cricket; but there is every reason for supposing that the Eleven of 1898 will be well up to the high standard which has of late years been reached.

Photo. Waite and Pettitt,

Cheltenham.

C. T. S.

Mr. J. N. B. CHAMPAIN.

A BAD MAN TO HOUNDS.

IN a previous issue of COUNTRY LIFE I discussed the subject of "A Good Man to Hounds." I now propose to do the same of a bad one, as it is always as well to be able to distinguish the base from the true metal. "A bad man to hounds" is a very good general definition of a man who is never in the first flight; but, on going more closely into the question, we shall find that in men there are many different degrees of badness, so we will roughly divide them into three classes, viz., the man who has no nerve, and yet is constantly making excuses; the man who, through his bad riding or ignorance of the sport, is never there; and the man who, whilst riding hard, takes too much out of his horse, and never knows what hounds are doing. Another class can also be named, who, though not, strictly speaking, bad men to hounds, have no claims whatever to being defined as good. I allude to those who neither pretend to, nor do, ride up to hounds, for from insufficiency of nerve, old age, or being badly mounted, they are unable to. They are, as a rule, keen sportsmen, infinitely preferable companions to those who always come up to one, many minutes after the fox has been broken up, with numerous excuses why they were not in at the death.

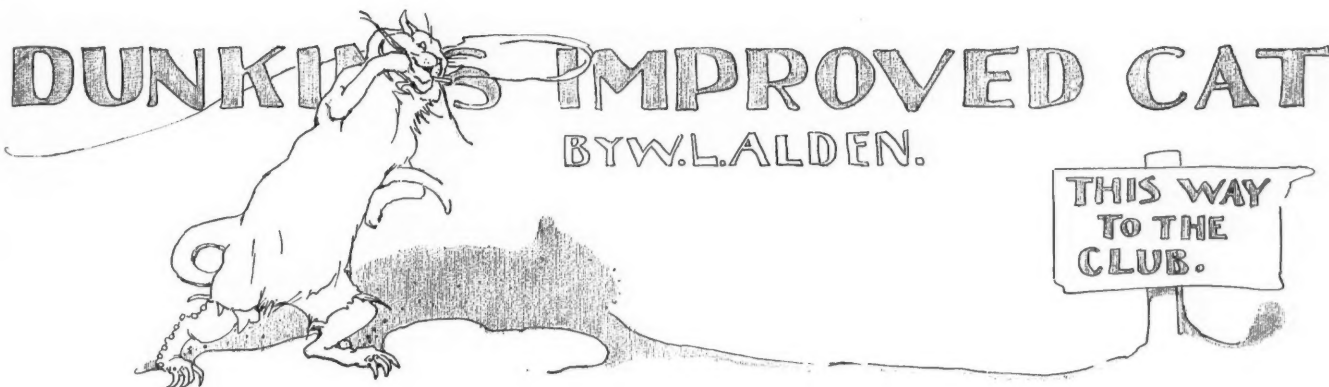
This class of man usually assumes the most confidential air when he tells you how his horse, for some mysterious reason, refused, or that he had a sudden pain between the shoulders just as the fox broke cover, which quite paralysed him for the moment. These excuses may be feasible enough to their inventor, but we can scarcely be expected to enter into them with the same gusto. It is surprising the amount of ingenuity and zeal that is expended over excuses, which, if applied to a better cause, would be worthy of all praise. These so-called sportsmen are those to be despised, and I use the despise advisedly, for not only do they show a want of physical courage, but they also display a lack of moral courage which is as amusing as it is contemptible. A laughable incident occurred to me some years ago in connection with one of these gentry, which will aptly demonstrate my former remarks. It happened in this way. Hounds were running very slowly, and I was riding somewhat wide of them to the right, when I came to a hedge set upon a small bank. In one place the fence was broken, leaving little more than the bank; on one side of the gap thus formed was a man whose "get up" was undeniable, on the other side was his horse, which he was vainly endeavouring to pull across with the help of the reins, but that worthy steed, with his head in the air and his ears well back, refused to move. On nearing the spot, I was requested to crack my whip, which I accordingly did, with the instantaneous effect of making the animal jump what he had hitherto refused to do. As we cantered across the next field I was treated by my companion to a perfect volley of excuses why he had not ridden at the place, but, paying little heed to them, and thinking to reassure him, I informed him that there was an opening in the very low flight of posts and rails we were approaching; but, instead of going through it, although it was immediately in his way, he summoned up all his courage, turned aside, and charged the rails—they were not more than two feet and a-half high. Never shall I forget the look of

triumph that lit up his face as he landed safely on the other side, thinking, no doubt, that he had re-established his reputation in my eyes.

I have hitherto written of men who, though objectionable, are harmless, but I now come to a class who are positively dangerous, not only to those in whose company they are, but also to the best interests of "the sport of kings," viz., those who are ignorant of riding and hunting alike, for one generally goes with the other. Their favourite trick is to ride on your horse's heels, and I know no more horrid sensation when charging a fence, except a sudden sight of wire, than to be aware that a man is coming close behind you, for if your horse makes a mistake, he is bound to be on top of you. What can one do? Nothing; for this description of man, even if you call out to him, cannot stop his horse, for as a rule that sensible quadruped is master of the situation. The only thing to be done is afterwards to tell him with as much grace as you can command, but still in the most unmistakable language, not to come so near to you in the future. Their want of knowledge of horsemanship and the sport causes them to jump on hounds, to needlessly smash fences, let the stock out of the fields, and ride over wheat and seeds—the latter they cannot distinguish from stubbles—thereby exasperating the M.F.H., and causing the farmer over whose land they ride to condemn fox-hunters and fox-hunting in no measured terms. Their ignorance of the laws of the sport is clearly attributable to their not being "entered" to hounds during their youth. They are to be found chiefly in the vicinity of large towns, and they also flourish abundantly in the home counties, where many a master has to pay dearly, both in popularity and pecuniarily, for their wrong doings. They are not only bad men to hounds in every sense of the phrase, but they are also the worst type of men to have out hunting at all, for, among their other sins, they subscribe little or nothing to the hunt; in this respect they are likely to be checked in the future, for there is little doubt that "capping" will become almost universal, now that the Quorn, the Southdown, and other influential packs have made a start.

We now come to the men who, whilst riding hard, take too much out of their horses, and do not know what hounds are doing. This class lack what is generally known as "an eye for a country," and never seem to be able to keep with hounds even when they have obtained a good start, for from want of a keen perception they have to be continually spurring their horses to make up for lost ground, therefore they have no time to see what hounds are about; in fact, they use their heels to make up for a deficiency in their intellect, which in time will wear down the best of horses. A description which was once given of a celebrated historical personage exactly meets their case, namely, that he was like a St. George and the Dragon on a coin, always galloping, but never getting any further. In conclusion, I may say that the best way for a bad man to hounds to develop into a good one is to constantly study the methods of those who are always with hounds, real professors of the art, a few of whom may be found in every hunt.

RAITHBY.



THE conversation had fallen upon dogs, and the scientific man had told a number of anecdotes illustrating the wonderful sagacity of his Newfoundland dog. Of course the anecdotes were strictly true, for the scientific man was a professor in a Scotch University, who detested lying as a grossly imaginative as well as an immoral practice. His anecdotes would have been received in respectful silence had it not been for the American statesman, who had come to England to induce the Government to adopt bimetalism, and to sell a silver mine in Colorado. He shifted his cigar to the extreme left corner of his mouth, and remarked:—

"Those are first-class anecdotes, professor, and make a man wish that he had had the luck to be born a dog, but it is plain that you don't know much about cats, or else you wouldn't waste your time in the society of dogs. I have studied cats considerable in my time, and I've had friends that gave their whole minds to them, and I am free to say that the average cat has more intelligence than any twelve dogs that you can select, besides being full of dignity and self-respect, and so on. A dog, in my opinion, is a monarchical beast. He is contented to consider himself inferior to everybody else, but a cat is full of republican ideas. I never yet knew a cat that didn't consider himself the equal of every living thing, including James G. Blaine and Mr. Gladstone. You may call that self-conceit, but I call it republicanism. Then the cat is a first-class fighting animal, and believes that he can whip all creation. That's the true republican spirit, and it bears me out in saying that the cat is naturally a republican beast.

"When I lived in Minneapolis, my next-door neighbour, Eliphalet B. Dunkin, had a fighting cat that he was everlastingly proud of. He was a man who had been studying cats all his life, and knew more about them than any other man I ever met. I've spent evening after evening discussing politics and cat-fighting and such-like things with him, and I'm not ashamed to say that I learned a great deal from him. Do any of you gentlemen know how cats fight? I feel pretty sure you don't. A cat despises a rough and tumble fight, such as dogs always go in for. He has his rules of the ring, and he sticks to them. He never fights another cat with his fore paws, but just uses them and his teeth in order to get a good hold of his adversary. When two cats are matched against one another, they stand 3ft. apart for a few minutes, doing a little preliminary cussing, and then they grapple, catch as catch can, and do the whole of their fighting with their hind legs. The aim of each cat, you understand, is to kick the sawdust out of the other cat, and all biting and scratching with the front paws is barred, except so far as is necessary to keep a good hold. It would be easy enough for a cat to bite its adversary in the jugular vein and kill him on the spot; but biting anywhere in the region of the jugular vein would be decided by the umpire to be a foul, and would be regarded by all sporting cats as a mean and contemptible action. When a cat fights a dog, the cat never kicks with the hind legs, but just tries to blind the dog by striking at his eyes with either fore paw. He does this because the rules of the ring don't apply to a fight between a dog and a cat; but in fighting his own species the cat fights strictly according to rule.

"Dunkin had a cat that was a born fighter. His name was Epaminondas H. Twitchell, being named after one of our leading Congressmen, but we always called him Pam for short. I don't myself hold with giving cats these long names. Call a cat some simple name, like John Smith or Henry Thompson, and it will please him just as well as if you named him after Napoleon Bonaparte himself. When Pam was about two years old he went in for the heavy-weight championship, having already won the light-weight and middle-weight championships. There were about fifty cats, large and small, in the neighbourhood, and Pam usually had from two to four fights every night. You see that, when you go in for the championship, you have to fight every rival cat to a finish. Now a cat takes a deal of licking, and you are bound to keep on challenging him and fighting him until he says that he is content to retire from the arena. There was a

vacant house just back of Dunkin's that the local cats had taken as an athletic club-house, and they used to assemble there every night for fighting purposes. Sometimes there'd be a ring in every room in that house, and as many as half a dozen matches would be fought at the same time. Pam was regular in attending the club, and in the course of his fights he naturally met with a good many accidents. He lost both of his ears, which was only what might have been expected, for an ear makes about the best hold you can get if you grab it with your teeth and hold on for all you're worth; and naturally you do grab it, if you are a good scientific fighter. Of course, that sort of thing is wearing to ears, and a professional fighting cat generally manages to get his ears pretty well torn in pieces.

"Dunkin used to grieve considerably over the loss of his cat's ears. It wasn't so much on account of the cat, for the less ears a fighting cat has the better he is off, but it was because Pam's disreputable appearance was a sort of reflection on his owner. When people saw Dunkin in company with a cat that had lost the whole of both ears, they would say that he was a low-down, disgraceful animal, and that his master couldn't be very much better. You'll say that this was illogical, and, of course, it was, but people always will judge a man by the animals he keeps, and you can't help it. I knew a young clergyman, who was as nice a man as ever walked, and who was that mild and timid that he didn't dare to express his feelings to a small boy who knocked his hat off with a ripe tomato; but because this young clergyman had a dog who had lost his tail and part of his upper lip, which gave him a kind of bloodthirsty expression, people thought that the young man was no better than a common dog-fighter, and wouldn't attend his church, or even consent to be buried by him.

"After mourning over Pam's ears for a month or two, Dunkin made up his mind to provide him with a pair of artificial ears. He went to a blacksmith and had a pair of pointed steel ears made, about two inches long. These he fastened to Pam's head with straps, and you can't imagine how improved the cat's appearance was. At first Pam didn't like his new ears, but he saw his mistake after his first fight. You see, his antagonist couldn't get any sort of hold of the steel ears, and whenever he tried it he simply broke three or four of his front teeth. Pam saw that his steel ears were going to be an immense advantage to him in his struggle for the championship, and he was as proud of them as a man is of his first set of artificial teeth. After a little while he wouldn't consent to having his ears taken off on any pretence whatever, and he would polish them up with his fore paws till they shone almost like silver. Dunkin was very much pleased with his success in improving Pam's ears, and he looked around to see what further improvements he could put on his cat. He thought of fitting him with a tail cover of flexible steel, with a row of sharp teeth on the upper and under sides, but he gave the idea up because I convinced him that a tail of the proposed pattern would be continually catching in the bushes in the back-yard, and would be a hindrance instead of a help to Pam. Finally, Dunkin said to me, 'I've got an idea that will work at last—I'm going to improve that cat by giving him a pair of fighting boots.'

"What are they?' said I.

"I am going to make a pair of wash-leather boots,' said Dunkin, 'and cover them with the same sort of fur that Pam wears. They're to be worn on his hind legs, and I calculate to furnish each boot with five curved steel knives, of the same general pattern as Pam's claws, only they will be twice as long and fifty times as sharp. It stands to reason that when he comes to kicking an adversary, his steel claws will surprise that there adversary more than he has ever been surprised in the whole course of his life. In my opinion, if Pam gets two or three fair kicks with those boots, his steel claws will cut clean through to the other cat's spine, and that particular animal will never fight another battle.'

"The idea isn't half bad,' said I; 'but will it be considered fair in fighting circles for Pam to wear artificial steel claws? It

seems to me that it will be about as unfair as it would be for a pugilist to wear brass knuckles, and that, everyone knows, wouldn't be allowed."

"What you say," replied Dunkin, "shows that you don't know anything about the rules of the cat ring. In the first place, artificial claws are nowhere mentioned in the rules, and, in the second place, the chances are that no living cat will notice that there is anything artificial about Pam. The umpire will be on the look-out to see that Pam does not make a foul bite, or doesn't strike at his adversary's eyes with his fore paws, but neither the umpire nor anyone in the ring will dream of examining Pam's hind feet. Besides, so long as a cat don't break any of the rules as they are now in force, he can do pretty much anything that pleases him. Just you wait till my cat gets on his steel-clawed boots, and I'll bet you what you please that he wins the championship inside of two weeks. Why, by the end of that time he'll be the only cat of the male species within five miles of this house."

"Well, Dunkin did as he said. About a fortnight after our conversation on artificial claws, he called on me with Pam under his arm, wearing his new fighting boots, and seeming to be as proud of them as he might have been of two tails. The boots came half-way up the leg, and were so like his own fur in appearance that unless you had been told to look particularly at them, you wouldn't have noticed that the cat was wearing them. The steel claws were a good three-quarters of an inch long, and were curved like a sickle, and as sharp as a razor. I noticed that there was considerable blood on them, and I asked Dunkin how it came there."

"If you'll look over in my back-yard," said he, "you'll see two dead cats. Pam attended to them either before he went to the club or after he returned. How many cats he laid out at the club I don't know, but I do know that there aint a blessed cat in all Minneapolis who would have the ghost of a chance with Pam now that he knows what those boots are for, and appreciates them at their real value."

"What's to keep him from forgetting his steel claws, and trying to scratch himself with his hind feet? If he ever does that he will cut himself all to pieces."

"There's no danger of that," said Dunkin. "If you knew as much of the manners and customs of cats as I know, you'd be aware of the fact that the only thing a cat ever scratches with his hind foot is his ear. Now Pam can't hurt his artificial ears by scratching, and, what is more, he never feels any call to scratch them. Besides, Pam understands the nature and workings of his fighting boots as well as you or I do, and you needn't be afraid that he will have any accidents with them. He aint that sort of cat."

"Well, Pam's progress towards the championship was dazzling in its rapidity after he took to fighting with artificial claws. He hardly ever failed to kill his adversary, and when he had once killed a cat he didn't have to send him any more challenges. The way the cats in that locality decreased was something remarkable. They got to be so few in number that the club was disbanded, and the club-house was taken by a family of Germans who wouldn't allow any sort of cat on the premises. Pam was so much attached to his boots that he never dreamed of going into a fight without them. He never wore them in the house, for Mrs. Dunkin, who was a very careful housekeeper, always said that nobody, whether cat or man, should wear boots in her house. When Pam felt that he wanted to go out he would bring his boots in his mouth to Dunkin, or Mrs. Dunkin, or even the servant girl, and ask to have them put on. Then he'd sail out in search of adventures, and as a rule he got them."

"I had never taken much interest in cat-fighting myself, but Dunkin bragged so much about the invincibility of Pam that finally I got tired of hearing it, and I said that while I was willing to admit that Pam was a powerful fighter, I rather thought I could produce a cat that could take the championship away from him."

"Produce him," says Dunkin. "Produce him, and if he whips Pam I'll agree to pay you any sum not over 500 dollars that you may be willing to bet on the contest."

"I won't positively say that my unknown will whip Pam," said I, "but I am prepared to bet 500 dollars that Pam can't whip him."

"It's all the same thing," said Dunkin. "I'll take your bet, whatever it is. Remember that the two cats are to fight under the rules of the cat ring, and that if your cat is guilty of a foul I shall claim that 500 dollars on the spot."

"I knew that my uncle, who lived about three miles out of town, had a fighting cat who had made a fine reputation in that neighbourhood. He was lighter than Pam, but he was a tremendous tall and sinewy cat, and I calculated that the length of his hind legs was at least an inch more than that of Pam's. However, I didn't rely on the cat's natural abilities. I went to see my uncle, and borrowed the cat, on the pretence that my house was full of mice. As soon as the animal got accustomed to me

and to his new residence, I fixed a day for the fight, and set to work to put my cat in good fighting condition."

"The first thing I did was to have him measured for a full suit of chain armour, which covered the whole of his body, excepting his head and legs, and was so flexible that he could do any sort of athletic feat with it on that he could have done with it off. I was certain that when Montmorency, which was the cat's name, was wearing this armour, it would be impossible for Dunkin's cat to do him any serious injury, except so far as cutting his legs or tail was concerned. Moreover, I calculated that when Pam should get to work on the chain armour he would break his steel claws, and, finding himself unable to make any progress towards whipping the other cat, would give up the contest in disgust. But I wasn't going to be contented with any such victory as that. I meant that my cat should make such an example of Pam that I should never hear another word about his fighting powers. The armour was only meant for defence. I had, besides, a scheme for furnishing Montmorency with offensive weapons which I rather thought would lie over Dunkin's plan of artificial claws as much as those artificial claws laid over Nature's own weapons."

"I made a pair of leather boots for my cat with thick iron soles, and with small bags on the outside of the soles which could be sealed up with glue after I had filled them. There were no claws of any kind on these boots, for I knew that Dunkin would expect me to furnish my cat with steel claws, and that he would probably contrive some way of making them useless. Which was just what he did, for when his cat came on the ground, I saw that Dunkin had furnished him with a tin plate covering the whole of his chest and abdomen. It was as good a protection as Montmorency's chain armour, but being stiff, it interfered with the activity of the cat, and in that respect it was a mistake."

"About a minute before I brought Montmorency into the ring, which was pitched in Dunkin's back-yard, I filled the two bags that I had made on the soles of his boots with nitro-glycerine. There was about a teaspoonful in each bag, and I calculated that as soon as Montmorency had got his grip, and set to work to kick Pam's tin breastplate, there would be an explosion. I suppose you all know that nitro-glycerine, and dynamite, and all that class of explosives, explode downwards instead of upwards? Knowing this, and being familiar with the working of nitro-glycerine in blasting operations, I had very little fear that an explosion would do my cat any harm, while I felt sure that it would blow Pam into smithereens. Dunkin laughed when he saw me carrying Montmorency carefully in my arms, and putting him gently down on the grass, just 3ft. in front of Pam."

"Seem's to be a pretty delicate sort of cat you've got there," said he, in a sneering sort of way. "Are you afraid he'll break if you drop him; and did you put that coat on to prevent him taking cold in his precious throat?"

"Never you mind," said I. "But just take my advice, and stand a good way back from the arena. This is going to be such a fight as neither you nor any other man or cat ever yet saw, and you may get your eyes hurt if you stand too close to it."

"Dunkin noticed that there was something queer in the way Montmorency was standing, and that made him think that I had tried to fit the cat with a set of artificial claws, and had made a failure of it. He began to laugh at Montmorency, and said things about the length of his legs which I didn't consider quite gentlemanly. However, I let him talk, for just then the two cats clinched, and each getting a fair hold, they settled down to business as if they didn't either of them believe in a hereafter."

"I waited for that nitro-glycerine to explode, but the thing hung fire. I could see that Montmorency was getting several bad cuts on the legs, but I knew that Pam's steel claws must be getting used up against the other cat's armour, and I had very little fear that my cat could be whipped. I was just in the act of remarking to Dunkin that the two cats were putting up a first-class fight, when the nitro-glycerine went off, and the cats disappeared. When I say disappeared, I mean it. I caught a glimpse of Montmorency sailing through the air in a general south-easterly direction, but there wasn't so much as a claw of the other cat left. He was blown into such small pieces that nobody from that day to this has ever been able to find the least trace of him."

"I don't call that fair," said Dunkin. "This was to be a fight, not an Armenian massacre."

"Rules of the ring!" said I. "You said that anything was allowed except a foul bite. Your cat wore boots with steel claws. My cat preferred boots loaded with nitro-glycerine. I consider that my cat won; but seeing as it's going to be difficult to prove which cat left this world ahead of the other, I'm willing to call the fight a draw, and to declare all bets off."

"That suited Dunkin well enough, and we settled up on that basis. I can't say that Dunkin acted unfairly in any way, but

he didn't take his cat's defeat as cheerfully as a true sportsman would have done. However, that doesn't interest you. What will interest you, and especially the professor, is what I afterwards learned about Montmorency. If you will believe it, that identical cat descended from the clouds, as you might say, at my uncle's house about ten seconds, as near as I can calculate, after the explosion. He wasn't hurt in the least by his journey, though he must have gone up about two miles in the air, in order to have travelled as far as my uncle's house. At least, that is what one of our best mathematicians said, after calculating what he called the cat's curve. If you can produce a dog that has intelligence enough to shape his course to any given destination, after having been unexpectedly blown two miles above the earth, I will admit that dogs are as intelligent as cats, but I want to see a dog perform that little feat before I do admit it. If the professor is willing to try the

experiment with his own dog, I'll furnish the nitro-glycerine with pleasure."

"Do you really mean," asked the professor, "that your story is true?"

"Of course I do," replied the unblushing statesman. "It's as true as the dog anecdotes that you and other people tell. I didn't doubt your stories, so I expect you won't doubt mine."

The professor relapsed into silence, and I could see that he was struggling earnestly to believe what he had been told. The effort was undoubtedly a failure, for in a few moments he took his leave, saying good-night to all of us except the statesman, whose existence he seemed suddenly to forget. The latter chuckled grimly to himself, and then remarked, "They're a queer lot, those Scotchmen! There aint a blessed one of them that can reconcile himself to a joke, unless he makes it himself and mistakes it for science."

Mrs. PANMURE GORDON'S COLLIES.—II.

AN article that includes the descriptions of such a quartette of Collies as Champions Barwell Beatrice, Barwell Dolly, Barwell Pride, and Wishaw Maid, would, one might imagine, suffice to exhaust the notable contents of a private kennel of the breed. But not so at Loudwater; therefore I give a second one to portray the beauty of the following Collies of striking merit.

Barwell Mystery, late Marieville Lassie, is a year younger, having been born May 27th, 1895, and in colour she is sable and white. She is perhaps the biggest of her sex that was ever seen, and some fanciers think her the best at the present day. Mystery has a wonderful head, though perhaps just a shade over-shot, well-carried ears, good legs and feet, and plenty of coat. She was bred by Mr. John Caldwell, and is by Waverley Marvel—Lassie, so that she has Edgbaston Marvel and Prince of Marieville as grandsires, while her wins include two 1sts at Belfast, a 1st at Birmingham, and a 1st at the Collie Club Show at the Crystal Palace.

OLD HALL QUEEN, 95, K.C.S.B. 134A, a granddaughter of Edgbaston Marvel and Tabley Rose, was born in May, 1895, and was bred by Mr. J. Agnew. She is a tricolour, being black, tan, and white, but as her saddle and hindquarters are black and her chest and legs spotless white, there is little left for the tan. Old Hall Queen has won many first prizes, among them four 1sts when she was brought out at Liverpool last year, but her latest achievements were at the recent Scottish Kennel Club Show, where she won 1st open and 1st limit, besides specials, while at the Ladies' Summer Show she carried off 1st challenge, 1st winners, and 2nd in the open.

Among her other wins are 1st puppy and 2nd limit at the Collie Club Show last year, three 2nds and special at Leicester, a 2nd and special of Glasgow, and at the Show of Collies at the Aquarium, a 1st, 2nd, and special, so her record is not unworthy of her breeding and of her kennel. Mrs. Panmure Gordon



Photo. by T. Fall, OLD HALL QUEEN. Baker Street

purchased her from Mr. Reginald Higson, and the cheque paid for her ran into three figures.

CARRICK ALEXANDRA, K.C.S.B. 1449A, is a pretty sable and white, with a neat head and small ears. She is a daughter of Rochdale Chriss and Florrie, and has won innumerable prizes, among which Mrs. Panmure Gordon is very proud of the Kennel Club's 1st limit and 2nd open of 1896, 3rd limit Birmingham, and 1st Holland Park. Carrick Alexandra is, like Molly, a granddaughter of Champion Ormskirk Amazement.

Such a collection of Champion Collies would not be complete without a good merle, and so Mrs. Panmure Gordon has one named CLOWN, 94, which was bred by Dr. Edwardes Ker, and is by Blue Beard out of Ella. He is a strikingly handsome dog, having the best of marbled coats, with which his wall eyes are in quaint and beautiful harmony. Clown, like Molly, has the freedom of the house and grounds, but, I am loth to relate, is very often a truant, for he loves a day's poaching, and of course the country round provides him with excellent sport and a mixed bag.

Since my visit, Clown has had two pretty comrades of his own colour, Hoo End Pansy and Grove Sweet Lavender, which Mr. Panmure Gordon was lucky enough to buy at the sale of the unfortunate Miss Mary Garnett's kennels.

Nor was I surprised to see one of the quaint, old-fashioned "Bearded Collies," a variety to which fashion promises to give fresh life; and Jock is without doubt one of the best specimens of the breed. His coat is superb, and



Photo. by T. Fall,

CARRICK ALEXANDRA.

Baker Street.

I question if even a day's rain in the Highlands could penetrate it. His colour is a dark blue grizzle, except his paws, which shade off to white. He is an upstanding dog, with big limbs, well set and straight, and no dog could carry his tail with more effect than does Jock. His eyes are dark and of a beautifully soft expression. Indeed, he is a Collie to be proud of, and I do not wonder that his mistress is fascinated by the variety.

At the time of my visit there were three sets of Collie puppies, among which I could recognise several very good ones. One family was by Portington Bar None and Old Hall Queen; another belonged to Carrick Alexandra, the sire being Champion Southport Perfection; while the third are the progeny of Barwell Beatrice, and are also by Champion Southport Perfection. This last litter contained five sables—the most completely fascinating mites imaginable. Needless to say they were all luxuriously kennelled, and that all the arrangements for health and comfort were on the latest sanitary lines. Indeed, rearing puppies, usually so anxious and disappointing a process, must at Loudwater be quite a pleasure; and with such a kennel and so capable a man as Wilson to look after them, it is not rash to predict that Mrs. Panmure Gordon will soon have the reward of breeding a Champion at Loudwater.

In the photograph, A KENNEL OF CHAMPIONS, the dogs are Champion Barwell Beatrice, Barwell Dolly, Barwell Pride, and



Photo, by T. Fall,

CLOWN.

Baker Street.

Old Hall Queen—a quartette of incomparable pedigree. The promising youngsters are puppies about five months of age, and were bred at Loudwater from the Champions. A. S. R.

NOTES FROM THE KENNEL.

HOLIDAY shows appear to be less popular every year, and the only one held this Christmas in the South was wretchedly supported. This was a show at Ladywell, near Lewisham, on Boxing Day, under the management of the North and Mid Kent Canine Society. The attendance of the public was encouraging, although not nearly so numerous as was the case twelve months ago, when the show was held in the Drill Hall, Lewisham; whilst the entry was most unrepresentative, very few dogs from a distance being benched. Airedales, despite the offer of a large number of specials by the South of England Airedale Terrier Club, were deleted from the catalogue, several North Country entries being returned, whilst neither Fox-terriers or Bulldogs, popular varieties at most shows, succeeded in drawing even a moderate entry.

Collies were, indeed, the only section at all noteworthy, for here Wellesbourne Conqueror, certainly the best sheepdog south of Birmingham, put in an appearance and secured premier honours. This very handsome sable and white was bought as a puppy by his present owner, Mr. Reginald Higson, for £400, and, as an investment, has proved very lucrative. Some authorities do not hesitate in declaring him to be the most typical living Collie, although he has yet to beat Mr. A. H. Megson's Ormskirk Emerald, who at present claims championship honours. It was expected this redoubtable pair would meet at Birmingham—next to Manchester the best provincial Collie show; but Mr. Megson's crack being out of coat, his astute owner declined the contest, and was represented by his veteran Southport Perfection. The New Year will undoubtedly witness exciting contests between Wellesbourne Conqueror, Rightaway, and Ormskirk Emerald, a trio of Collies the like of which has not been known previously.

Captain Pretyma, M.P., over whose fine estate at Orwell the field trials of the Kennel Club have been held for some years past, is now out of danger. So far has this gallant sportsman recovered from the very serious accident that be'ell him a fortnight ago, that his removal from Walton Ferry, Felixstowe, has been possible, and he is now receiving the best of attention at Orwell Park, his fine residence near Ipswich. It may here be mentioned that he has again given permission for his estate to be used for the spring trials of the Kennel Club, and a date in April has been already fixed for their decision. The committee of the English club have also arranged their trials to be held in April, on the Hague Park estate, near Bedford, Lord Arthur Fitzroy and Mr. T. J. Harrison have consented to act as judges.

The year just passed has been a memorable one, death having been very busy in the ranks of



Photo, by T. Fall,

JOCK.

Baker Street.



Photo, by T. Fall,

A KENNEL OF CHAMPIONS.

Baker Street.

fanciers. Early in the year Mr. Hugh Dalziel and the Rev. R. O. Callaghan were called away; whilst in the autumn Sir Everett Millais, who had but recently succeeded to the baronetcy on the death of his father, Sir John Millais, also passed to the great unknown. The canine world is the poorer for the loss of these enthusiasts, each of whom in his respective station did noble and unselfish work. Followers of the scientific aspect of breeding will never forget the efforts at the solution of abstruse points made by Sir Everett Millais; whilst few breeders did more to bring the dashing Irish Setters to the front, either on the bench or in the field, than the Rev. R. O. Callaghan. Mr. Dalziel was a prolific writer on dogs, and as a judge had also attained very great prominence. Major Jamison, struck down by lightning, Messrs. A. Taylor (Beaminster), A. P. Heywood Lonsdale (Shavington), W. Holdsworth (Bradford), G. Hellewell (Sheffield), Luke Turner (Leicester), and A. C. Jackson (Bath), will also be missed.

BIRKDALE.



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THE MEET AT THE HARROW INN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE BARSTABLE HARRIERS.

WE present to our readers some illustrations of the Barstable Harriers, now under the mastership of Mr. F. Poyser, of Hutton Place. Early in last year we offered to our readers other pictures giving a good idea of the country near Brentwood, where the pack has always shown good sport. We are glad to be able to relate that it flourishes under its new master.

A WOODLAND COUNTRY.

THERE are different definitions of a woodland country. For example, you will hear a man whose sole idea of a hunting country is that four-fifths of it should consist of grass, separated by big fences, more or less negotiable, growl when, at the end of a good fifty minutes, hounds run into a wood of some hundred acres; and should there be another of the same size within a mile, he will probably say that the good thing was spoiled by getting into the woodlands. But this is by no means my conception of a woodland country. To my mind, a big wood set down in the middle of an enclosed country no more makes it a woodland country than one swallow makes a summer. A woodland country proper is one in which one big woodland succeeds another, woods of hundreds of acres, separated from each other by

tracts of wild country, mostly grass, and with here and there a wood which is almost interminable.

Now it may be thought that in such a country as I have been endeavouring to describe, fox-hunting cannot be carried on with any amount of success, or with reasonable enjoyment, that foxes will ring about and run short, and that if hounds should run it will be impossible to ride to them. All of which is exactly the reverse of what really does happen; and some of the best runs I have seen during a pretty long experience have been in woodland countries. And very enjoyable is a good woodland run, though, of course, it cannot be said to take rank with forty bright minutes over grass. But it has a charm peculiarly its own, and I can assure those who have not tried it that it takes a good man to live with hounds when scent serves in a woodland country. Foxes, if let alone, are, I think, stouter and wilder than they are in more favoured districts, and a woodland fox is no more prone to hang about home sweet home than his friend in the grass countries. Then a good woodland fox generally makes a grand point and takes a lot of catching, and, moreover, the woodlands generally carry a scent, so that there is plenty of pace; and unless a horse is well bred, his rider has little chance of seeing the run in a good place.

The best class of hunter for a woodland country is a stout, short-legged, well-bred one, standing not more than 15h. 3in. by preference. A taller horse bothers his rider occasionally amongst the branches, and, moreover, a short-legged, active horse is required to cross the woods, for crossing the woods in a great

majority of cases involves a good deal of slipping down and climbing uphill. And let not the man who goes for an odd day's hunting into a woodland country think that he can do without a jumper. He will find plenty of stiff places to oppose his progress, and if he does not come across the brooks and drains of the plains, he will find stiff timber to fly in places, and frequently will have to jump a rough place in a very cramped situation.

One of the most typical of the woodland countries with which I am acquainted is that which lies between the Tyndale, the Hexhamshire, and the North Durham, and which is known in hunting history as the Braes of Derwent. Originally, I believe, the country was hunted by the Slaley Hounds, but when that pack was given up in 1854, Mr. William Cowen, a well-known Northumberland sportsman who sold to Lord Rosebery his first Derby horse, Ladas, first of the name—got a pack of hounds together, and hunted it until 1868, when he was succeeded by his brother, the late Colonel J. A. Cowen, well known as a keen fancier of bloodhounds, who carried the horn till his death in 1895. There was an interregnum of a year, and then Mr. Lewis Priestman came to the rescue, and got a pack of hounds together. These consisted chiefly of drafts from the North Durham, the Tyndale, and the Cleveland, and a judicious purchase was made when the Callaly pack was broken up. As this is Mr. Priestman's second season, his hounds have got to run well together, and it may be noted that in a woodland country hounds soon get to run together and become self-reliant.

It carries a rare scent, this Braes of Derwent country, as I had an opportunity of seeing when paying a recent visit to it (December 14th). The fixture was Newlands, a picturesque spot indeed, had it not been for the tall chimneys



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CROSSING A MARSHLAND BRIDGE.

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LOOKING FOR A HARE.

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so much in evidence. For far away on the west spread an undulating country, such as it would be a pleasure to cross on a horse that understood banks and stone walls. Big woodlands were on every hand; in the distance they showed out on hillside and hilltop; a river brawled along close to us; there was a general breeziness in the air, and, the tall chimneys notwithstanding, there was a wildness about the country which was especially charming to anyone who, like myself, had been lately hunting in countries where grass largely prevailed, and which had a right, more or less, to the distinction, if distinction it be, of "fashionable." And what a delightful contrast to the big fields of ardent and impetuous sportsmen and sportswomen, not all of whom knew "the rules of the road," to which I had been lately accustomed, to find only some sixteen or eighteen at the meet.

A quick find is greatly to be appreciated on every occasion, but particularly is it so in a woodland country, for a long draw in the latter may induce a little slackness, with the result that, when at last hounds do find, the "slack" man is left. The first covert we drew—a wood of some extent with a rocky dene at the bottom of it—provided the first fox, who quickly crossed the road into Mere Burn Wood, round the fastnesses of which he led hounds a merry dance, and it took us all we knew to keep on terms with them. The undulating West Country, most of it grass, to which I have already referred, was before us, and hopes beat high of a gallop over it, hopes, however, which were not realised. For our fox made a sudden turn, and ran round the Mere Burn Wood and back into the covert in which they had found. Here they made rather a curious turn, but soon they were driving on at the far end of it and out into the open, going at such a pace and in such resolute manner as warned those of us who saw them that we could afford to lose no time and miss no opportunities if we would be there at the finish. Over the grass they ran, leaving Newlands on the left, and across the road into Heugh Wood they ran without stopping; and down the wood we scrambled and along the broad grass ride at the bottom at best pace, catching hounds as they left the wood and raced over Hollins Hill, where there was ozone in plenty, and where Nature looked at her wildest. Forward on into Milkwell Burn, another big wood, down and up the steep ascents of which we pressed on with what speed we might. But Milkwell Burn is a great stronghold for foxes, and what I had dreaded happened, viz., hounds divided, and not only into two lots, but into three. Changing foxes at the end of a fast forty minutes is a trial indeed for hounds, and much worse is it when, as on this occasion, a couple of hounds had slipped on in front. Well did hounds work, however, even under these disadvantageous circumstances, and for twenty-five minutes more they stuck to the line, hunting with great perseverance till they got to the immense woods of Chopwell, where, as the earths were open, Mr. Priestman wisely gave it up. Chopwell Woods, it may interest some of my readers to know, is the original of the famous Pinch-me-near Forest, and "the farther you get into it the worse the riding becomes. Impervious thickets, through which hounds sneeze, but horses can make no way, . . . wet, sterile sand or slobby quagmires, ever and anon a fallen tree, or a fern-concealed log." Well indeed might Mr. Jorrocks say it was the most outlandish place he was ever in.

After leaving Chopwell they went to the Hollins Farm Plantation, where they found at once, and after running a fast ring in the open and back into the plantation, they left the Hollins Farm on the left and ran through Milkwell Burn to Heugh Wood, where at the end of forty minutes they marked their fox to ground. So close were they to him and so "angry" for him that one hound followed him, and excavating became necessary. It was a rocky place, where digging was practically impossible, but as the fox was sheltered amongst the rocks, a pick-axe and leverage did good work. It was a long job, however, and daylight had gone and a candle been lighted long before the hound was rescued and the fox bolted and killed. Then was the same candle required to show those of us who had waited to the end the road across the low end of the dene, and we went home well pleased with a good day in the woodlands.

KED ROVER.

Hunter Stallions.

THE various articles and letters which we have printed from time to time on the subject of purchasing hunters have left untouched the more serious question of breeding them. Of course, the two things are in a sense quite different, though in the long run they are practically very much the same. To breed your own hunter, and make him, is in many ways preferable to buying the ready-made article, whilst the breeding of hunters for sale would always be a profitable business if one could only be a little more certain of results.

The chief difficulty in breeding hunters, and in breeding all other animals, is that the moment you contaminate the pure blood with any half-bred strain you at once lose all certainty of like begetting like; and the more you use impure blood the less you can tell what you are going to get. By sticking to the Stud Book a breeder can usually form a fairly accurate opinion as to what the produce of any given horse and mare will be like. Breeding from half-breds is like jumping in the dark. There have been many cases in which fine, powerful half-bred mares, with substance and quality, have produced to the same thoroughbred horse first a coarse, clumsy commoner, without the smallest trace of blood, and then a weedy wretch with no size, substance, or bone. The question of blood is therefore very important, and one that has always been a matter of argument among hunting men, some swearing by thorough-breds, and others by half-breds. For those who can ride them there is nothing to be compared to thorough-breds; but, having for the last 200 years been bred for nothing but speed, they are usually lacking in the size and substance which are necessary for big men. The principal difficulty, therefore, is to combine size and substance with blood; and to show that this class of horse is not to be found every day, it may be mentioned that the late Mr. "Bob" Chapman would always give 300 guineas for any young horse that did so. This is what the famous Dick Christian said on the subject:—"Thoroughbred horses make the best. I never heard of a great thing yet

but it was done by a thoroughbred horse." Whyte Melville, too, was of the same opinion, and said, "the thoroughbred horse is, I think, superior to the rest of his kind." That well-known authority, The Druid, however, was in favour of putting a short-legged cart mare to a thoroughbred horse, and crossing her first filly with a thoroughbred, his contention being that a hunter's size should come from his dam, and the breeding from his sire. Suffolks, Cleveland Bays, and even Exmoor ponies—everything, in fact, except those useless and uncalled-for brutes named hackneys—have been known occasionally to breed good hunters to thoroughbred horses, though, as has already been stated, the nearer the mare is to being clean-bred the less likely she will be to disappoint her owner.

The first conclusion to be arrived at, therefore, is, that it is indispensable that the hunter stallion should be thoroughbred. The next questions to be considered are, what the ideal stallion should be, and where he is to be found. The first is easily answered. A high-class hunter should be a lengthy, short-legged horse, not too big, with great strong quarters, hips, and hocks, and above all with good shoulders, without which any horse will soon be exhausted in jumping. This being the sort of horse we want to produce, the sire should obviously be of that type too. As to his blood, that will be best decided in the light of known results. As everyone knows, the descendants of Hermit are all good jumpers, his sons Ascetic and Retreat being especially remarkable as sires of great hunters and steeplechasers. The Rosicrucians and Brown Breads are also natural jumpers, and invariably make bold, clever, sensible hunters. The sons of Wild Oats are often bad-tempered, but they have a remarkable aptitude for getting over country, and George Frederick was famous for siring good hunters some years ago. Stockwell and Rataplan, too, used to get bold, big-boned, powerful horses that made extraordinary hunters, which may have been partly due to their dam Pocahontas, another of whose sons, Knight of Kars, was sire of The Colonel, twice winner of the Liverpool, and of an extraordinary number of great hunters and chasers; whilst her other famous son, King Tom, was sire of Skylark, whose son, The Soarer, also won a Grand National.

Uncas and Ben Battle were sons of Stockwell and Rataplan respectively, and they sired the winners of an enormous number of steeplechases in Ireland, where their stock were always in great demand as hunters. The same may be said of Xenophon, who, like George Frederick, was a direct descendant of Touchstone through Orlando. Wild Oats, it may be mentioned, was a grandson of Ion, and it is worth noticing that Hermit combines this blood on his dam Sec'lusion's side with that of Touchstone on his sire's.

On the principle "By their fruits ye shall know them," we conclude that horses descended from any of the four families of Bird-catcher, Touchstone, Weatherbit, or Ion, are likely to sire good jumpers, and that the more of such blood they combine the better. It is not for a moment to be supposed that horses without any of this blood will never get good hunters, but only that, judging from results, stallions bred on these lines are the most likely to succeed. The question of where to find such horses is more difficult to answer. In fact, there are very few of them in these days available as hunter sires. There was a time when a great number of thoroughbred, and three-parts bred, hunters were bred in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Shropshire, and South Wales—Pembrokeshire especially—and there were plenty of well-bred hunter stallions to be found in those days. This has, more or less, ceased to be the case now, and the hunter stallion has become an almost extinct species. The last stud of this sort where horses were bred from the best old strains of jumping blood, for the distinct purpose of making steeplechasers and high-class hunters, was Mr. R. K. Mainwaring's stud at Underdale, near Shrewsbury. He had some beautifully-bred stallions and mares there, and bred a number of very high-class hunters, but this stud was broken up and sold off last year.

There is, of course, in these days, a Hunters' Improvement Society and a Hunters' Stud Book, but they are not likely to do much good. You cannot make an impure breed into a pure one simply by giving it a stud book, though, of course, if nothing but pure blood were used, and mares and stallions were selected purely for their bone, size, and jumping blood, we should, in the course of many generations, have evolved a race of thoroughbred horses up to 15st. with hounds.

As things are at present, the best way to breed a good hunter is to select some roomy, big-boned mare who has distinguished herself either between the flags, in the hunting field, or as the dam of some good chasers or hunters, and put her to a horse of the best jumping blood, who suits her in conformation. If such a mare be clean-bred, she will very likely breed a good steeplechaser, or at any rate a very high-class hunter, and if she be three-parts bred she may produce the latter, though it should be remembered that a strain of impure blood, either on the sire or dam's side, will always make the result more or less uncertain.

Country Life

ILLUSTRATED.

THE Journal for all interested in
Country Life and Country Pursuits.

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EDITORIAL NOTICE.

The Editor will be glad to receive for consideration—and if suitable to accept and pay for—photographs, instantaneous or otherwise, bearing upon any of the subjects of which COUNTRY LIFE can treat, besides literary contributions, in the shape of articles and descriptions, as well as short stories, sporting or otherwise, not exceeding 2,000 words.

With regard to photographs, the price required, together with all descriptive particulars, must be plainly stated in a letter accompanying the prints. If it is desired, in the case of non-acceptance, that the latter should be returned, a sufficiently stamped and directed envelope must be enclosed for the purpose.

COUNTRY NOTES.

WITH the rise of temperature which destroyed the hopes of skaters came a severe fall in the barometer, accompanied by severe southerly and south-westerly gales, very heavy seas all round the coasts, and much rain in

places. Although the year has turned, up to the present there has been no ice or snow, and in the Southern Counties, at least, the winter season has been abnormally mild; but if, proverbially fickle as the science of meteorology is, inferences may be drawn from the experience of previous years, it is likely that, as was the case in 1890, an unseasonably warm Christmas will be followed by a severe "cold snap" later on, when the winter is usually supposed to be past. It is curious to note that the average night temperature of last week was considerably higher than that of May, 1897. During that month the mercury fell below freezing-point every twenty-four hours, and this unusual coldness accounted in a large measure for the scarcity of fruit in the autumn, and for the backwardness of deer at the beginning of the stalking season.

Lord Londonderry is entitled to take some credit to himself for having prophesied two years ago that the bottom had been touched in the matter of agricultural prices. In a recent speech he has been able to point to a good hay and corn season, to a marked improvement in the price of wheat, to an excellent root crop, and to fair autumn prices for sheep and lambs. He might have added that land is both letting and selling at a higher price than has been the case for some time past. His general advice, to practise science and to farm on principles at once business-like and scientific, is excellent. Above all things, attention ought to be paid to breeding none but the best quality of stock. A perfect beast costs no more to keep than a weed; but it is worth ever so much more in the market, and men who have paid attention to breeding have made good prices during the most depressed times.

This is the time for retrospect of the dead year, and if there are some sports of which the season has lasted on into this year, it is still true that others have come to an end, and their history may be written. Of such is deer-stalking of 1897, which has not been above the average in point of quality. Amongst the most successful of stalkers have been the Duke of York, at Guisachan and at Killarney, Lord Lovat, Lord and Lady Breadalbane, the Duke of Connaught, and Mr. Richard Arkwright. The last-named, says the *St. James's Gazette*, succeeded in 1895 in bringing off the "triple event" of killing a stag, a brace of grouse, and a salmon on the same day. That kind of triumph is more often achieved at the desk than in the open, and it is not easily forgotten.

The death of the Earl of Sefton, president of the National Coursing Club, made the past year memorable to coursing men; whilst Mr. T. P. Hale, nominator of Gallant, the winner of last season's Waterloo Cup, who died in August, was another familiar figure not spared to see the commencement of the present season. The veteran Scottish courser, Mr. W. O. Bell-Irving, also died, at the age of ninety-one; and Lancashire followers of the sport miss Mr. J. Gilbody, who, in his time, owned a very smart string of greyhounds. The best-known dogs who, in the year we bade farewell to a week ago, ran their last course were Hextra Speshul, the best puppy ever owned by Dr. Hopkins, and a winner at Witham in September; El Diablo, Brummagem Man, George Glendyne, and Lochinvar.

In our note on partridge driving at Holkham, published on December 18th, the number of partridges killed was set at a lower total than it actually reached. The "birds claimed" were 2,423 in the four days' shooting. When the bag was made up it was found to exceed the estimate of the guns and masters by nearly fifty brace; 2,530 partridges were bagged, which, with other game, made up a total of 2,636 head. The evenness of the bag on the different days, when various parts of the ground were driven, shows the astonishing and natural fitness of Lord Leicester's unique estate for carrying a great head of partridges. Six hundred and thirty-five were killed on December 7th, and on the subsequent days, 728, 582, and 585 respectively, by nine guns. Last year nearly 1,000 head more partridges were shot on the same ground in the same time, namely, four days, the bag being 3,439, as against 2,530 birds.

The period of Christmas and the New Year is, when the winter is soft and King Frost keeps away, the time at which the hunting season is at fever heat; and in this particular season the mildness of the recent weeks has been welcome by way of compensation, for the hard going which tried horse and hound until well into the month of November. Nowhere has the "good hunting," which Mr. Kipling's jungle folk wish one another, been realised more thoroughly than in Yorkshire, where the Bramham, the Sinnington, and the York and Ainsty have had capital sport of late. A notable run, for example, was that of the York and Ainsty from Coldstream Gorse to Peep o' Day Whin, eight miles from point to point, in an hour and twelve minutes.

Coursing in the last week of 1897 was again practically a dead letter. In the South, the Eastern Counties' fixture, expected to be brought off on December 29th, was abandoned, no reason being given, although at Newmarket, a month ago, Mr. Ledger stated that he saw no hope of filling the stakes. The fixture was, however, retained in the calendar, a fact prohibiting other clubs annexing the date. A semi-private meeting was, however, held on the same day at Cooling, a favourite rendezvous of the members of the Cliffe and Hundred of Hoo Club. The Sleaford executive were, however, compelled to abandon their fixture, also set for the last Wednesday in the year, partly owing to the threatened frost, but mainly on account of lack of entries, none of the stakes having filled. The fixture now stands adjourned until January 19th and 20th. The twice-postponed South Essex gathering at Rainham has now been abandoned, a large portion of the marshes being still under water as the result of the terrible storm last month, when part of the river wall was washed away.

For a day or two about Christmastide the whole country, and especially the Eastern Counties, laboured under such a severe dose of fog as we seldom see beyond the smoke area of great cities. It was not a smoky fog, of course—a white fog rather than a black one—but it had a sort of solid whiteness that was as impenetrable by the eye as a genuine product of the metropolis. Great was the delay and confusion of Christmas traffic. More interesting to note, however, was the behaviour of the birds in this unduly thick pall. They gave constant evidence that instinct is no magic quality, in virtue of which they can afford to dispense with the use of such humble agents as their senses and their share of reasoning power. The writer happened to be partridge driving on one of the days of fog. Generally these misty days are fatal for the partridge in this business. He comes slowly, feeling his way, as it were, through the fog, right up to the line of guns, which is practically invisible; but this is only in the slight and normal fogs. In such visitations as we have lost ourselves in lately the birds are as much at a loss as we, without a glimpse of the familiar landmarks to guide them. The particular birds that the writer was helping to shoot, or not to shoot—for even in the fog there is a question about it with the driven partridge—came over nicely and quietly once, as their manner is in a fog. Next, a beat was taken parallel with this first one, and again the birds came well and in great plenty. Then it was a question of bringing these two beats back again—taking the birds home, in fact, over the guns; and we expected great things. To our surprise, scarcely a bird came; the beaters had found none on the ground. It seemed almost certain that these birds had lost their way. Assuredly they had forsaken their usual line of flight, which was well known, and, as it happened, peculiarly well defined just here. We never saw them again; we had lost them, as it appeared they had lost themselves.

Partridge driving, in such fogs as we have had lately in the Eastern Counties, becomes quite a dangerous business. Sometimes, in the afternoons, the beaters have been almost within gunshot before they have loomed into sight out of the mist, and the birds, whose ways in the fog are quite incalculable, will sometimes lie very close, so that beaters and birds come into range at the same moment. At other times the birds will take such long flights that they are never seen on their own ground any more that day, and probably find their way back to it by running more often than by flight. Indeed flight, during the fog, seems full of danger for all birds. Keen sighted as they are, under normal conditions, fog seems to baffle them altogether; and in a foggy day's partridge driving, if one of the stands happens to be behind a railway embankment or road above which run some telegraph wires, the number of birds that may be seen to strike themselves against the wires is quite astonishing. Occasionally, of course, the same mischance befalls them on a clear day, and may be ascribed to their confusion at suddenly seeing the enemy standing in wait for them. But many evidences combine to show us that birds have no very clear vision in the fog—indeed, that it seems to trouble their normal clear sight more acutely than our own, perhaps in proportion as their sight is clearer, under ordinary circumstances, than ours.

We have had some curious comments lately on the tendency, remarked in these notes a week or so back, of extremes to meet in an abnormally mild season like the earlier part of the present winter. Both the hoopoe and the green sandpiper are recorded as being seen and shot—which means deadly identification—in December. This is so late a date for the appearance in England of these at all seasons rare visitors that it is evident they must have been deceived by the mild weather into supposing that the time was still autumn. On the other hand, we have three recorded instances of robins nesting, the earliest date being noticed in the *Field* of December 25th—namely, December 16th. These birds, it is quite obvious, must have made a mistake of the opposite nature to that of the hoopoe and the green sandpiper,

and deemed that spring must be already with us—a fallacy in which they might well be confirmed by the prematurely bursting buds of the hazel foliage. The hoopoe, of which we were not able to note the sex or age in a previous account, we have now ascertained to be a young female. It is therefore likely that it may have been born in this country, for the hoopoe occasionally nests in the Southern Counties, and suffered some congenital or accidental injury that made it unable to take flight south at the usual time. Bewick, rather in opposition to Seeböhm, maintains that these birds are rarely seen in pairs in England, although it is the general opinion that the hoopoe pairs once for life. But in the present instance, since the bird was a young one, it is unlikely that its courting and wooing would have been yet accomplished. Robins are always the earliest nesters, and it is probable that before many weeks pass we shall hear of several other instances of their mistaking protracted autumn for unusually early spring.

The extreme serenity and, outside London, geniality of the weather is best realised by the botanist. The lilac bushes are already pushing forward those sage-green buds which are one of the first harbingers of spring; and, if one is impatient and inquisitive enough to dive into the snowdrop bed, the bulbs show all the indications of premature activity. It is to be hoped that the general forward policy will be checked in time, for if there is one thing more fatal than another in English weather it is the combination of an early spring and late frosts; and all people who have laid their hopes on fruit trees know how very rarely the month of March is without one or two instances of frost severity.

One of the minor vexations of life at this season of country house visits, shooting parties, and the like, is that at no two successive houses do you find people playing with the same kind of billiard balls. So, at least, it seems, though doubtless this is stating the matter in an exaggerated form. A few years ago there was none of this trouble. Ivory, except for a few occasional experiments in celluloid and other compounds, was the recognised material for billiard balls. If you played, it was always with the ivory balls. But now it is very different. Bongoline is threatening to run the ivory off the cloth, and the poor elephant incurs some danger of being, in the American phrase, "played out." At present the two materials are holding their own fairly well, one against the other; you find bongoline on the table as often as ivory, and *vice versa*. Generally, still, in houses that favour the bongoline, there is a set of the ivory to fall back on, so that there need be no trouble at all if only you could agree with your adversary as to the kind of ball; but often it happens that you have accustomed yourself to the use of the one, while your opponent is no less wedded to the other. And there is a real difference between them—a difference in the angle at which the two kinds "come off," the bongoline taking a wider angle than the ivory; so that passing from the one to the other has an inevitable effect on one's play. It is by no means easy to accustom oneself all at once to the change, and some strokes that are easy with bongoline become a good deal harder with ivory, and *vice versa*. On the relative merits there is still much discussion, but bongoline has the advantage of cheapness; and the fact that it is a manufactured article, of the same weight throughout, favours it yet further, at the expense of the natural ivory, which is apt to be heavier in one part than another, with the result of giving a bias to the side that is the heavier.

The remarkable success of Galtee More, Count Schomberg, Winkfield's Pride, and other Irish horses on the English turf during the past year naturally draws considerable attention to the rise and progress of racing in the Green Isle. Under many disadvantages horse-racing in Ireland has shown wonderful progress during the past half century, but more particularly in the latter part of it. Statistics are dry reading, but are necessary to demonstrate this advance. In 1845 the number of races in Ireland was 323, and the total value of these was £17,851, the largest winner being Mr. Preston's wonderful steeplechase mare, Brunette, by Sir Hercules, who captured six events, worth £898, over the country, while on the flat Lord Howth's Wolf Dog, by Freney, was at the head of the list with seven wins, making a total of £740. In twenty years—1865—not much progress had been made, as, though the number of races (346) showed an increase, yet the money value had not increased in proportion. Another ten years, however, saw the races up to 381, and the cash close on £30,000. In the last twenty years the greatest improvement has been made, and in 1895 the races stood at 636, and the money at £42,023. Messrs. Weatherby's racing statistics show that the value of stakes run for in England was £306,958 in 1874, and the aggregate value had increased to £465,488 in 1897. In Ireland, though of course on a much smaller scale, there has been a corresponding increase during the same period, statistics showing an improvement of £10,432 between these years.

On the last day of the year 1897, three Irishmen, who were closely identified with Irish sport, passed away. These were Mr. Rice Meredith, Mr. E. M'Alister, and Mr. J. G. Kelly. Mr. Meredith was well known in the racing world as an owner, trainer, and rider. As far back as the year 1871 he rode his own mare, Dagmar (nominated by the Marquis of Drogheda), to victory in the Kildare Hunt Cup, at Punchestown, riding against such good men as Captains Smith, Trocke, and Hutton. He afterwards had many a successful mount, and was the owner and trainer of a large number of bracket-winners while he was located at Rathbride Manor, at the Curragh. A few weeks ago Mr. Meredith broke his leg while out with the Ward Hounds, but was getting all right when he died quite suddenly, from heart disease, it is supposed. Mr. M'Alister was very well known in connection with Irish football, for he had been secretary to the Irish Rugby Union since 1886, and to his exertions is mainly due the position which Irish football now occupies. Mr. M'Alister was a most successful "grinder" in Trinity College, and in both spheres he will be sadly missed. Mr. Kelly was intimately connected with Irish yachting, and as a yachting correspondent he had no equal.

Forestry statistics, as lately published by the Registrar-General for Ireland, would go to show that much as that country requires planting, this industry is almost totally neglected. That Ireland was at one period very heavily timbered is certain, and the remains of oak and pine trees found in the bogs prove that these must have attained a noble growth. It is to be presumed that those parts of the country which were at one time so well wooded, but are now devoid of trees, might be profitably re-afforested. In 1841 the forest area of Ireland was 345,604 acres, and in 1897 it had decreased to 307,407 acres. Munster has done more in the way of planting during the past year than the other provinces, while bleak Connaught, which requires the shelter, and has far more waste land than the other three provinces, has only 55 acres down to its credit. It is not alone that the beauty of Erin would be considerably enhanced by judicious planting, but it would be found that by providing more cover game would wonderfully increase, especially in the bleak West. Even osier growing, which might be most profitably carried on, is totally neglected, except in the County Armagh.

The Bedale Hounds had an excellent day's sport on Friday, when they met at Burton Hall. The first fox gave a very fast fifteen minutes before he got to ground. The second fox led the field at a very smart pace for thirty-five minutes, without a check, but eventually ran hounds out of scent. An afternoon fox was found at Wildwood, and, pointing for Hornby, afforded a sharp gallop, and a satisfactory finish to a first-class day's sport.

The Yorkshire rivers have now fined down, and grayling anglers, chiefly local men, have done fairly well with the swimming worm. In the depths of the Yore and Swale coarse fish have been feeding freely. The weather continues exceptionally mild.

A notable pack of hounds is that of Mr. Ryan, which hunts the splendid country between the town of Tipperary and the County Limerick. They are nominally harriers, but will hunt a deer or a fox just as well as a hare. The Scarteen "Blazers" are the old Irish black-and-tans, and have been in the Ryan family for a period of 200 years. Mr. Clement Ryan, of Emly, is the present master, and grand sport he shows with his black-and-tans. The pack consists of sixteen couples, and they hunt on Mondays and Fridays. The country over which they hunt is a fine grass one, with enormous banks. The music of the Scarteens is magnificent, being more like the cry of the beagle.

It is not very generally known that the great Dan O'Connell was a most enthusiastic huntsman. The O'Connell family had a pack of the old black-and-tan Irish beagles at Derrynane Abbey, County Kerry, and "The Liberator" was never so happy as when following his hounds over the wild Kerry mountains.

Football, which, thanks to frost and holidays, had gone through a short period of hibernation, has again burst into very vigorous life. On Saturday last everyone appeared to be playing everyone, for, besides the list of ordinary club matches, a multitude of touring clubs were scattered all over the country. Of the tourists the Corinthians and Casuals come a long way first in quality among Association clubs, but have not met with quite unqualified success. Previously to the tour the Corinthians had met with no single reverse, although they had on one occasion even shown the temerity of playing two first-class professional teams simultaneously. Consequently their annual match with Queen's Park, the leading amateurs of the North, was watched with especial interest. The Corinthians led at half-time by two goals to one, but, losing the lead early in the second half, at last

lost by three goals to five. As was feared, it was found impossible adequately to fill Lodge's place at back, and the defeat may be almost entirely attributed to weakness in this division. Throughout the tour, otherwise successful, the forwards, especially G. O. Smith, Burnup, and Vassall, were extremely good, whilst Oakley at back was better than ever, and will certainly regain his International cap. The same hope may be expressed of Campbell, as goal-keeper.

The Casuals, who were not quite so strong as they hoped to be, were successful beyond expectation. Though they met with one reverse from Lincoln City, they won with some ease against clubs of much greater "paper strength," notably Darlington, a team of great local reputation. They wound up the tour with an interesting fight against Middlesbrough, a club which is taking some trouble to recover the form which some years ago enabled them to win the Amateur Cup. Through the tour Moon showed himself a most useful goal getter, and Blaker was hardly less useful as a goal defender.

In the Rugby game the Welsh teams continue to show their superiority. On Saturday Swansea beat Old Merchant Taylors by more than thirty points, and Newport made short work of Bristol. Somehow the four three-quarter game, which originated in Wales, only flourishes in perfection in its own country. English, Scotch, and Irish teams, even when superior to Welsh, hardly ever acquire that machine-like precision and quickness of passing that distinguish the leading clubs of the Principality.

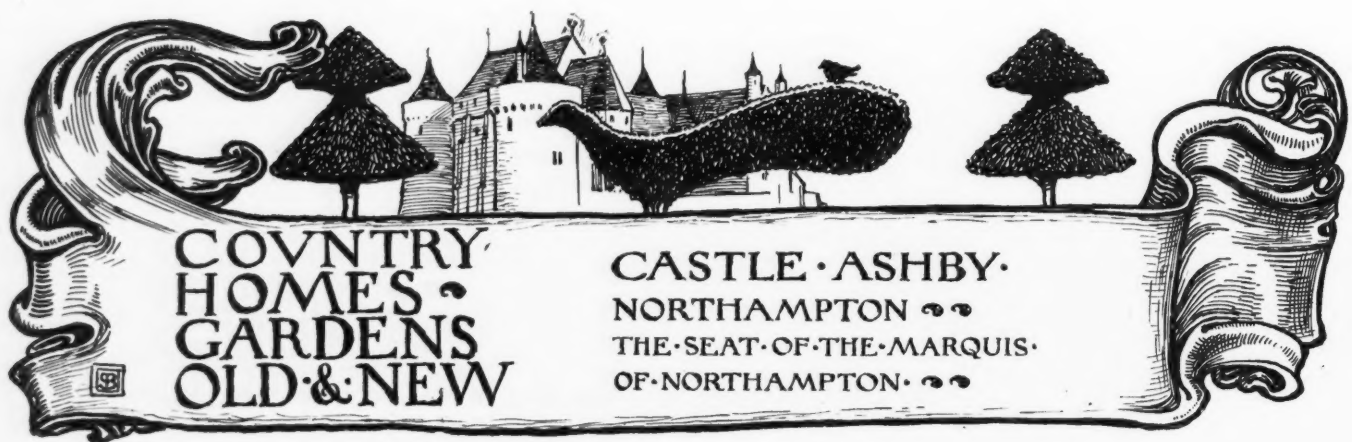
This contrast was very apparent in the return match of Blackheath and Cardiff on Saturday. A crowd of more than 12,000 assembled to see it, and saw, perhaps, the best match of the season. Cardiff, who were without Nicholls—certainly the best centre three-quarters in Wales—began with great dash, and led at half-time by eight points. Towards the end, however, the forwards seemed to tire, and Blackheath began to have much the better of the game, and were unlucky not to score more often. However, both Unwin, whose half-back play improves with every match, and Foulkes got behind; and as one of the tries was converted, the match thus ended in a draw.

Edinburgh University have also been trying conclusions with the Welshmen, and in spite of brilliant individual play found the Cardiff and Llanelly teams much too scientific. Cowie made some extraordinarily clever dodging runs, but mostly spoiled his attempts by wild passing at the finish. The Scotch have been not less unsuccessful in London, where the old Fettes and Loretto boys met Richmond. The game was well worth seeing. A. R. Smith was, as usual, continually conspicuous, and dropped a wonderful goal, but the Richmond forwards, true to their reputation for playing an uphill game, overran their opponents and gave their backs a number of openings, which they utilised with more than their usual skill.

Teddington and Bromley are still undefeated among Southern hockey teams, and celebrated the commencement of the second half of the season on Saturday by very substantial victories over Tulse Hill and Staines respectively. Most of the other important games were, however, closely contested. Southgate defeated Hampstead by three goals to two, and Molesey beat Surbiton by a similar margin. Ealing fell to the Hawks by two to one, while Putney and Richmond were a goal better than East Sheen and Crystal Palace, and Croydon drew, with no point scored.

The advance of certain young clubs has been one of the most satisfactory features of the Southern lacrosse season, and Catford have in particular come to the front. On Saturday Surbiton, who have an unbeaten record so far, only defeated them by four goals to three in a friendly game, the winners certainly not showing the better form, the Christmas season being, perhaps, responsible for some loss of condition. Catford have the advantage of being able to command the services of many young players from St. Dunstan's College, Catford, where, in the second half of the season, it is not uncommon to see four games in progress in one afternoon. The other important matches decided on Saturday showed greater difference between the teams engaged than might have been expected on comparative form. Hampstead, for instance, should have made a better fight against Woodford than their eight to nil defeat showed, and Snarebrook hardly seemed likely to beat Croydon by ten goals to four, while Highgate's victory over Clapham was a distinct surprise. Saturday's play in the North was unimportant, there being no competition matches of any note. The first half of the Northern season left Albert Park at the head of the championship competition, but Stockport, who come second, have a better record on the number of games they have played, and are very likely to head the list at the end of the season.

HIPPIAS.

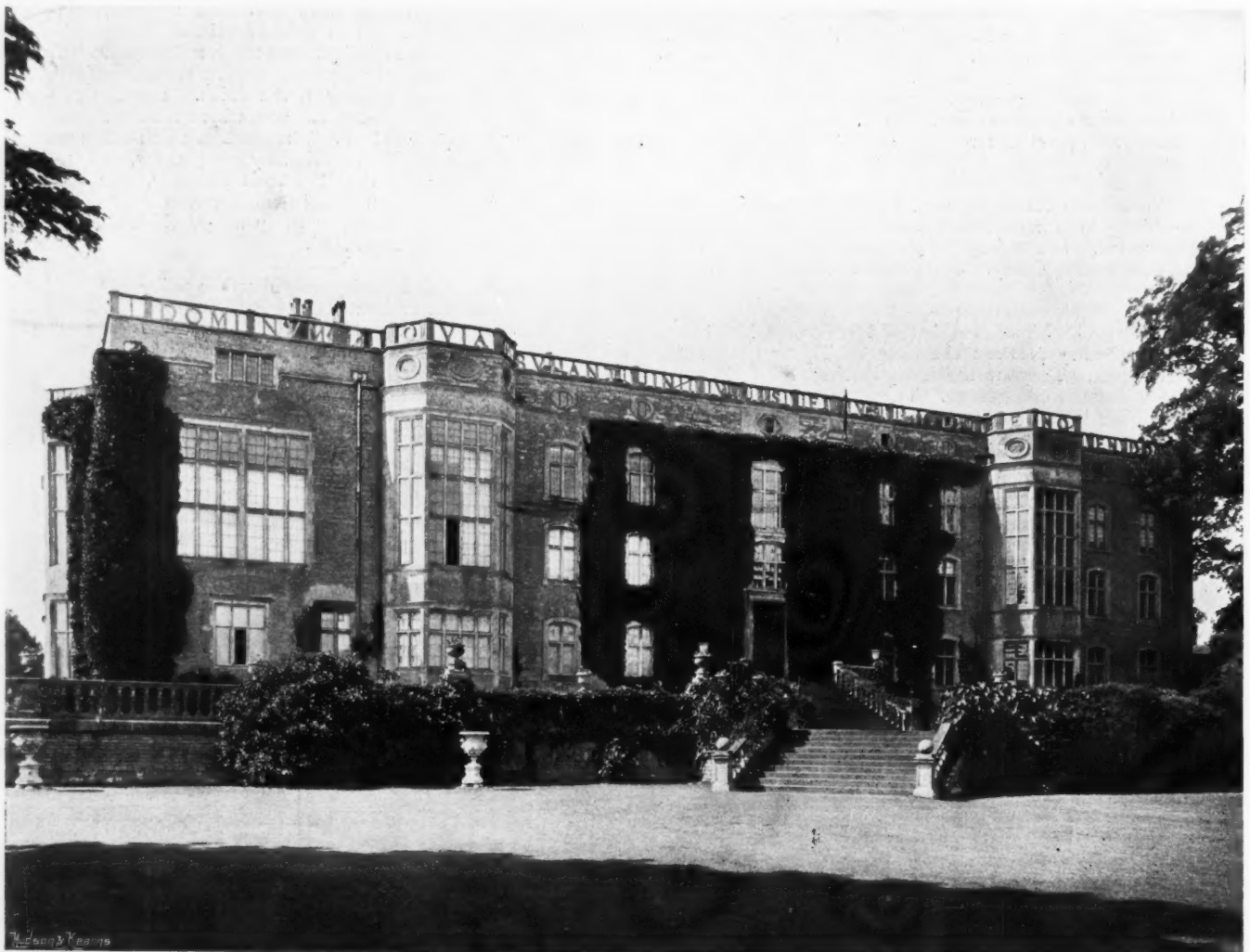


WHEN Captain Edward Waverley was moved by the oncoming summer to see something more of Scotland than was to be witnessed in his quarters at Dundee, a supreme delight awaited him. He was to be welcomed at a venerable house, and in its old garden, by Rose Bradwardine and her hospitable sire. What a pleasure, indeed, was that! We have the picture plainly before us—Alexander Saunderson, half-butler, half-gardener, working at Miss Rose's flower-bed, in the parterre, sheltered from the blasts by a close yew hedge, the venerable house clothed with fruit trees and evergreens, the terrace, with its grotesque animals and huge sun-dial, the garden below "kept with great accuracy," exhibiting a profusion of flowers, and "evergreens cut into grotesque forms," and descending level by level to the octangular summer-house, which overlooked the stream, there surprised by the dam into temporary tranquillity. Some may say that here was a formal garden, not at all to their minds, a place where, likely enough, you would find yew or box clipped into cocked hats or nameless developments of ornithology. They will laugh with Pope at the St. George, with arm not yet grown long enough to slay the dragon, and the quickset hog shot up by forgetfulness into a

porcupine. To them more dear would be Walpole's "living landscapes, chastened and polished, not transformed," or Armida's enchanted garden, where, amid all the scented ways, no trace remained of the gardener's hand, for "nowhere appeared the art which all this wrought."

"So with the rude the polished mingled was,
That natural seemed all and every part;
Nature would Craft in counterfeiting pass,
And imitate her imitator Art."

But the readers of COUNTRY LIFE will not survey the great and delightful series of pictures of English gardens, of which the first are presented to them to-day, without discovering that the world of gardening is wide, and presents room and verge enough for all; alike for those who love the mossy terrace, the fantastic yew, and the still canal, where lovely birds "float double, swan and shadow," and for those who delight in gentle meads, undulating slopes, and winding waters through the wood. They may discover, too, amid the warring words of the advocates of one style of gardening and the other, that, after all, it is no worse to trim a tree than a lawn, that all gardening is, in its measure, formal, and that it was only the extravagance of the old





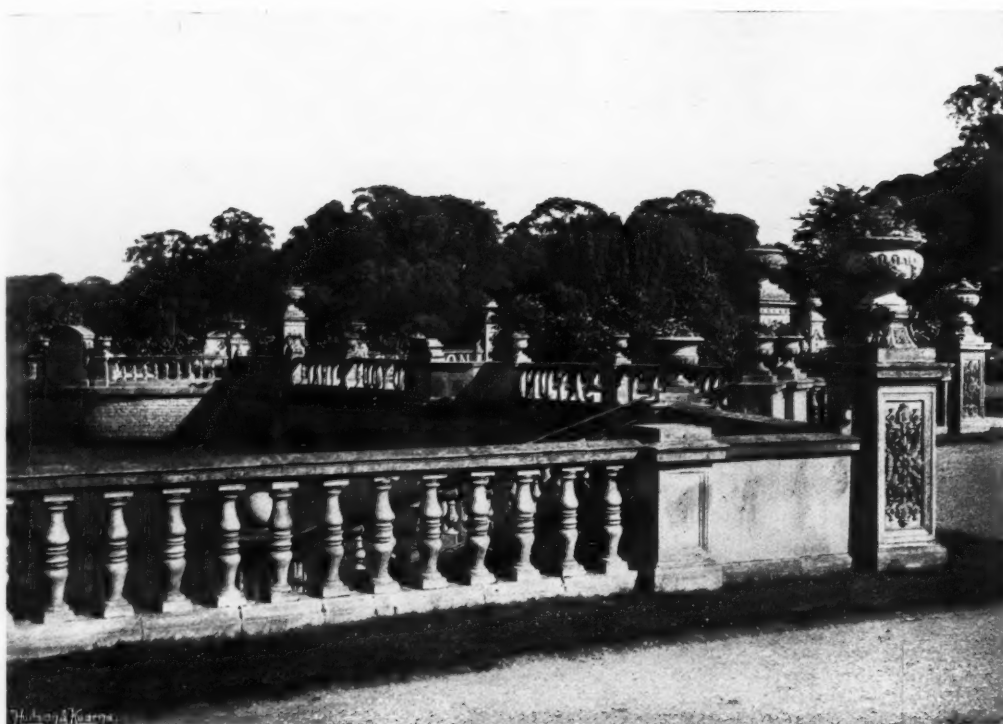
COUNTRY HOMES.—GARDENS OLD AND NEW: CASTLE ASHBY; THE GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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gardeners that brought them into contempt and ridicule. The beautiful gardens of Castle Ashby, the stately seat of the Marquis of Northampton, which have been selected for illustration to-day, do not markedly bear the extreme character of either style of gardening. They partake in a measure, with their surroundings, of some of the features of both. But what may be observed in these gardens, as in others that will follow them in these pages, is that the garden and the house are as one, where the hand of taste has ruled the whole. It would, for example, have been conspicuously incongruous if sloping lawns of landscape character had neighboured the house of Tully-Veolan, instead of the formal garden that Waverley saw when he lifted the latch of the wicket-door. In short, something of the quality of the house should be in its garden. But, before we turn our attention to Castle Ashby itself, it will be well, as briefly as may be, to indicate rather than describe the development of gardening, for every garden to be illustrated in this series will belong to some period or form of the gardener's art.

We need not go further back than the garden design of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which grew out of the grafting of Italian and Dutch ideas on the sturdy mediæval stock. It was formal gardening. There were enclosed spaces, bordered by close-clipped hedges, trim parterre, carefully-kept flower-beds, terraces with balls and urns, placid basins or still ponds, quaint shapes in box or yew standing, sentinel-like, here and there. In this there was nothing strange, for mediæval gardening had partaken of the character, and, indeed, the *topiarius* or pleacher, the man who cut and trained trees, was an ancient figure, and had worked even in the Tuscan garden of Pliny. To the simple ideas



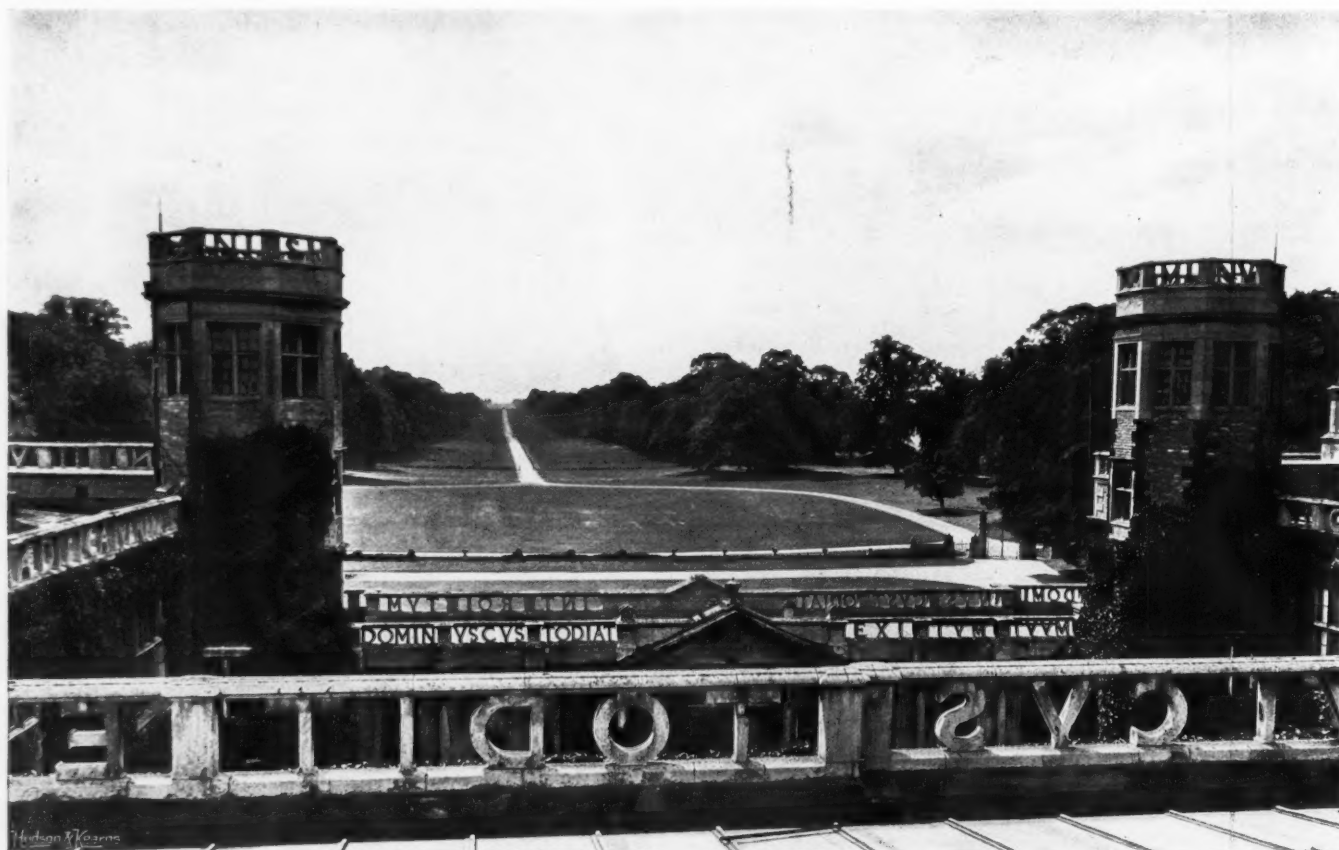
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THE TERRACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

and restricted achievements of the time, there came, with the Restoration, the magnificent conceptions of Le Nôtre: splendid avenues through dense masses of foliage—Castle Ashby gives us examples—broad expanses of grass and water, and great areas of flower-beds. Out of such ideas came the later gardens and avenues of Hampton Court.

Things might have gone well for the formal garden if the pleacher had not been led into extreme eccentricity in his work, and presented verdant sculpture which aroused the satire of Pope and Addison and many more. Then came the opportunity of the landscape gardener. "Is there anything more shocking than a stiff, regular garden?" asked Batty Langley, in his "New Principles of Gardening" in 1728.



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THE AVENUE, FROM THE ROOF.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

But it should be observed that Pope—who laid down an excellent principle in saying

"Still follow sense, of ev'ry art the soul,
Parts answering parts shall slide into a whole"

—was in some of his work as formal as the pleacher. The great change in garden design was brought about by Kent, whose work at Stowe awoke the supreme admiration of the poet, followed by "Capability" Brown, whose operations, with many excellences, resulted in the destruction of not a few fine old gardens and avenues, and called forth the angry denunciations of those who loved the sequestered gardens of their fathers. By such hands, as much as by neglect, were the gardens of Tully-veolan, like many gardens in real life, destroyed. Brown was most successful in his treatment of water, and one of his best achievements in this line is at Castle Ashby. Shenstone's place of the Leasowes, and Pain's Hill, the creation of the Hon. Charles Hamilton, were perhaps the happiest examples of the new style. There were extravagances, too, on the part of the landscape gardener,

and his temples, grottoes, caves, pyramids, and ruins were subjected to a great deal of ridicule, while many grew tired, like Knight—"The Landscape," 1795—of seeing the lawns spread out "in one eternal undulating sweep," and craved the things that had been destroyed:

"Some features then, at least, we should obtain
To mark this flat, insipid waving plain;
Some vary'd tints and forms would intervene
To break this uniform, eternal green."

Out of such clashing ideas has grown our modern gardening, and the illustrations in this series, which are of the most famous gardens in the land—though known to too few—will present vividly some wonderfully interesting survivals, and some not less charming creations.

But now let us turn to Castle Ashby, and learn what the house is, before we proceed to its gardens and to the great chase of Yardley, which is fortunately so near. JOHN LEYLAND.

LITERARY NOTES.

HOW many books published during the past year have taken a permanent place upon the bookshelves of cultivated men and women, and what has been their nature? That is the kind of question which occurs to one at this season of the year, when the counters of the publishers may be like a field that has been ploughed and harrowed and sown, but in which the seed has not yet germinated. Clearly the public taste, seizing the opportunity of unusually good material, has been for biography, literary history, and general history, frequently combined in the same volume. Few recent years, indeed, have been so rich in books of a high order of merit coming within this rather loose category. The Tennyson Memoir, Lord Roberts's "Forty-one Years in India," Mr. Ward's "Cardinal Wiseman," Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff's Reminiscences, Mrs. Oliphant's "Blackwood," the Mrs. Browning Letters—these are a real addition to the library. Of the novels of the year, there have not been many worthy to be kept: "Captains Courageous" (R. Kipling), "Phroso" (A. Hope), "The Well-beloved" (T. Hardy), "St. Ives" (R. L. Stevenson), "Dariel" (R. D. Blackmore), "The School for Saints" (John Oliver Hobbes), and "In Kedar's Tents" (Merriman), about complete the list. Really valuable poetry has come from Mr. Watson and Mr. Watts Dunton. That is all; but the list, as a whole, is satisfactory.

It is a mere coincidence, of course, that in the week which saw Lord Crewe suffer a serious accident in the hunting-field, *Literature* has published an amusing article from his pen. The subject is precisely one of those trifling curiosities of literary history which, while they have little or no substantial value, rarely fail to arouse considerable interest. The question to be decided was what Shelley actually wrote in the visitors' book of the inn at Chamouni, when he went there, in 1816, with Mary Godwin and Claire Clairmont? Also, did Byron alter the legend, which was by no means creditable to Shelley? This great question of gossip has now been set at rest, for, in a copy of "The Revolt of Islam," formerly the property of the Rev. A. Mitford, the leaf torn from the inn book has been discovered, and there is no doubt about Shelley's handwriting. Percy B. Shelley gave his *lieu de naissance* as "Sussex" correctly; in the columns "Ou ils sont dirigé?" he entered "L'enfer"; in the column for observations he wrote, in Greek, "I am philanthropist, a democrat, and an atheist." Byron made no alteration, though it seems that he did suggest to Lord Broughton that to erase the legend would be a kindness to Shelley. To us, looking back, it seems little short of a miracle of vulgarity that Shelley should have penned so gross a sentence as this, of which a commercial traveller would be heartily ashamed.

A small matter comes into my mind in this connection. Visitors' books are the happy hunting ground of the scribbler. Books coming from the circulating library are not. Half my enjoyment of a capital novel from Mr. Mudie's has been spoiled of late by a preceding reader who had made, not merely comments on the margin, but also alterations by way of correction, which

were all distinctly ignorant and wrong, in the text. The library authorities ought not to content themselves simply by compelling these defacers to pay for damage done, when they can catch them. They are guilty of "malicious injury to property," and a right-minded magistrate would administer a smart reproof to them as well as sharp discipline.

The rumour that Lord Rosebery is engaged on "an important historical work" lacks confirmation; it depends solely on the fact that he has often been to the British Museum of late. But I trust there is truth behind the story, for Lord Rosebery has already shown himself to be a learned, graceful, and thorough man of letters, and he possesses the art of political biography in perfection.

A book of madrigals on the Elizabethan model, but in honour of Queen Victoria, is a quaint and interesting conceit, and such a book is in preparation. Among the musical contributors will be Sir A. Sullivan, Sir Walter Parratt, Professor Villiers Stanford, and Mr. Hubert Parry. Verse will come from the Poet Laureate, Mr. Austin Dobson, Mr. A. C. Benson, the son of the late Archbishop, Mr. Robert Bridges, and Mr. Edmund Gosse.

I learn from an austere contemporary, dated January 1st, 1898, that Mr. Tom Gallon, "whose successful novel 'Tatterley' was followed this year by 'A Prince of Mischance,' is at present engaged upon a new book for Messrs. Hutchinson, to be published in the course of next year." To obtain a piece of good news and sense out of this, the fiction reader must insert "last" for "this," and "this" for "next." Other pieces of good news are that Mr. Joseph Conrad has a volume, as yet unnamed, in the hands of Mr. Fisher Unwin, and another, dealing with life on the Malay Coast, in preparation. All who liked "Patience Sparhawk" will learn with pleasure that Miss Atherton has completed her novel, "The Americans of Maundrell Abbey," for publication by Messrs. Service and Paton in the spring publishing season.

Of another kind of interest is the announcement that Messrs. Macmillan will shortly bring out, as parts of the Cambridge Natural History, a volume on "Birds," by Mr. A. H. Evans, and one on "Fishes," by Professor Bridge and others. "Fishes" again reminds me that Mr. John Bickerdyke, who is certainly versatile, has ready not only a new book on sea fishing, but also "A Story of Life in the Thames Valley." This seems to surprise some armchair critics, who imagine that a sportsman cannot be a man of letters. To such, the "Compleat Angler" is a complete answer.

Books to order from the library:—

"Peter the Great." K. Waliszewski. (Heinemann.)
"Kings of the Turf." "Thormanby." (Hutchinson.)
"Studies in Psychical Research." F. Podmore. (Kegan Paul.)
"The Barn Stormers." C. N. Williamson. (Hutchinson.)
"Memoir of Anne J. Clough." B. Clough. (Edward Arnold.)
"Life of Sir John Glover." Lady Glover. (Smith, Elder.) LOOKER-ON.

CYCLING NOTES.

AN interesting article appears in the current issue of the *Fortnightly Review* from the pen of that veteran wheelman, Mr. Joseph Pennell. In the main his contribution consists of annotations on the recent shows, but it is chiefly remarkable for the outspoken line he takes with regard to the American-built machine. An American himself, Mr. Pennell will, nevertheless, have no dealings with the transatlantic cycle, so long as he is in Europe, at any rate; though, for the boulevard riding of American towns, the native machine he considers adequate enough. He is down on the wooden rim and the single-tube tyre, the feeble American brake, and the flimsy and primitive mud and dress guards alike. These objections are familiar enough, and have many times been pointed out—to such an extent, indeed, that in certain American machines sold in England they have been removed.

But Mr. Pennell raises a new point, which is best explained in his own words:—"The crank shaft and axle," he says, "and in some cases even the chain wheel of these machines, are all in one piece; with the result that a bend in the crank means that the tourist probably will have to buy a new bicycle. I am an American, and I rode American machines for years. But at the present time I can only say that I should never think of touring on any one I have lately seen. They are beautifully made—made like a watch, it is sometimes said—beautifully finished. But they are made for and used as fair weather carriages. They can only be repaired, in many cases, by mechanics furnished with special tools. Though one may tour hundreds of miles without accident, for I believe the metal and construction are usually good, yet the slightest mishap, as likely as not, would necessitate the fitting of an entire new part of some other make, if it could be fitted, or the end to a trip. As a tourist, I refuse to be thus handicapped. If I were in America I should probably again ride an American bicycle. But until American machines are constructed so that they can be repaired by any ordinary mechanic or blacksmith, I do not want to ride them in Europe."

The Berlin correspondent of the *Fall Mall Gazette* reports the uprising of a movement among German cyclists for securing the due representation of their interests at all elections, whether state or municipal. One in four of the Berlin

electors owns a bicycle, so that the cyclists have power to make their influence felt; and as they have many irksome regulations to conform to which are unknown in Great Britain, we naturally wish success to their efforts. The puzzling part of the German regulations is that they differ so widely in various towns and states that no tourist can master them. One regulation, which I know to be largely in force, however, and which it is well for Englishmen to bear in mind, is that coloured side-lights to lamps are forbidden. This is believed to have originated from the fact that an engine-driver—so the story goes—once started his train at an inopportune moment because he mistook for a signal the coloured lamp of a cyclist who was crossing the line! Be that as it may, it is true enough that plain side-lights are enjoined in several states; and though I have toured in Germany with an English lamp without molestation, the fact that I never had occasion to light it may account for its having escaped notice.

"The bicycle in crime" is becoming a familiar headline in transatlantic and colonial journals. From Melbourne comes a vivid story of a series of audacious safe robberies, the perpetrators of which, it is alleged, have effected their hauls and their expeditious departures by the employment of the bicycle. In San Francisco, it may be remembered, a desperado made his escape a wheel last June, after shooting six persons in as many minutes. The New Jersey police are now looking for a group of highwaymen who fired at a wheelman and punctured his tyre at long range, after he had charged and ridden over one of their number. The cyclist himself, however, was not unarmed, and, instead of being forced to capitulate, he caused the bandits to beat a retreat after he had wounded one of them in the leg. In Great Britain we can hardly produce a parallel to any of these incidents, but there was a fair degree of melodramatic interest in the case at the Wood Green Sessions last week, in which two men were not only charged with "burgling" on bicycles, but one of them was further alleged to have made a leap for liberty into the New River, across which he swam, but only to be arrested at a later date.

The cry is "still they come!" County court cases in which cyclists are concerned are tending to become as "thick as autumnal leaves that strew

"the brooks in Vallombrosa," and if 1898 should prove, as is likely, even more remarkable in this respect than 1897, there will be a formidable aggregation of evidence which should have a wholesome effect on drivers of the reckless type. Among the latest cases is one at Coventry, in which a lady obtained £50 as damages through being run down by a float belonging—curiously enough—to a cycle company, a fact which shows that it is the individual driver who is generally to blame, not his employers, and that greater care is called for now than heretofore in the selection of capable men, seeing how altered are the conditions of road traffic, owing to increased population in part, but also to the immense number of vehicles now using the highways, in consequence of the introduction of the cycle. In another case, at Falmouth, Miss Marian Valler sued a builder for £17 damages, caused by the negligence of his servant. This was a most flagrant case, for Miss Valler and another lady were riding quietly along, at a moderate speed, when they heard a cart rapidly overtaking them. They took the precaution to fall in single file, and rode close to the kerb, notwithstanding which the carter came up at a fast pace, knocked Miss Valler down, smashed her machine to pieces, and injured her so severely that for three weeks she was unable to stand. The judge remarked that the damages were quite reasonable, and he would be sorry to give anything less. Yet a third case recently reported was one at Keighley, in which a cyclist obtained £5 from the owner of a gig, who rode him down at night, though the cyclist carried a light. In this case the road was under repair for half its width, and the driver of the gig betook himself to the smooth part, though it was on his wrong side. The least he could do, in the circumstances, was to drive carefully, but he did nothing of the kind, nor did he even carry a light.

Though cases like the foregoing are unpleasantly common, in that each one has involved more or less suffering to an inoffending cyclist, and that every wheelman or wheelwoman who takes to the road is liable to a similar misfortune, it is, nevertheless, a matter for congratulation that in very few of the actions brought before the courts has the cyclist failed to obtain justice; in the majority of instances, indeed, the full damages claimed have been awarded. Time was when the mere fact of a bicyclist being knocked down was regarded as *prima facie* evidence of his being himself to blame, so strong was the prejudice against the wheeling fraternity, although the machines themselves were far less speedy than now, and gears of over sixty-six were practically unknown on the road, while the human advertisement in the shape of a tyre or cycle company's record-breaker was not in daily evidence. There is a further gratifying feature to be recorded in this connection, and that is the amazing pucity of actions in which cyclists are sued for the running down of other people. Notwithstanding the chronic wails of pedestrians, the cases in which they come to grief through the alleged recklessness of the cyclist are almost non-existent.

It would appear to be in the police courts that the wheelman is still least certain of obtaining just treatment. The past year has shown a marked improvement even in this respect, however, notwithstanding certain exceptional cases of evil notoriety, such as the famous "hooking" affair at Prescott. The majority of cycling prosecutions nowadays are in respect of footpath riding and lampless machines; and though harsh decisions are occasionally given, there is no doubt that in most cases the cyclist is technically at fault. The sole markedly unsatisfactory feature of present-day police court proceedings is in respect of costs. A fine of half-a-crown is trivial enough, but when it carries with it costs up to many shillings more, the affair assumes a different complexion. The Summary Jurisdiction Act of 1879 requires that where a fine does not exceed 5s. an order shall not be made as of course for payment of costs by the defendant, and the Home Secretary, in 1891, issued a circular letter to the chairmen of justices throughout the country, from which the following passage may be quoted:

"The enactment appears to the Secretary of State clearly to imply that the non-imposition of costs is a course that should be ordinarily followed where the fine imposed is not more than five shillings, and that an express order to the contrary should be made only when the justices have some special reason for so doing. But from the information before him the Secretary of State is led to believe that in many courts the express order for payment of costs is made as a matter of course, while the remission of the justices' clerks' and the constable's fees is regarded as justifiable only in exceptional circumstances."

In their own interests, cyclists who may for any cause be summoned before a bench of magistrates will do well to instruct their solicitor on this point, with a view to his reminding the court of its obligations in the matter.

THE PILGRIM.

ON THE GREEN.

CHRISTMAS has not brought us very seasonable weather on the green, but it has been better than seasonable. For a day or two, just at Christmastide, a few red balls were in requisition, but merely by reason of rime, not of snow. Then there was a change, and for the rest of the old year, and well into the New Year, golfers have had better weather than their merits have given them the slightest right to expect. The best performance lately on the green has been the breaking of the record of the new course at Aberdeen by a young player, Mr. W. Hendry by name. His record score was 33 out and 39 home, and the total of 72 is said to be little short of wonderful, considering that the ground at the time was in a sodden state after the wet. But we all know that this is a state of affairs that has its compensations. The condition of soddenness is just that in which approach shots can be well pitched up, to fall dead beside the hole, also that in which the putt may be played strong and bold without fear of overrunning the hole, and with confidence that it will not suffer the kicks that distract it from the line when the ground is hard and fiery. All this, however, is not to say that Mr. Hendry's is not a splendid score, but rather to explain that there was no reason to deem it a fluke, but rather the result of sound golf. There are some pleasant stories sent by the wise men of the East about golf at Bangalore. A crow—these Indian crows have a shocking reputation—caught the ball while in flight, and, carrying it several hundred yards, dropped it into the hole. We have always understood that the Oriental had a poor opinion of Western intelligence; but in sending us such stories as this he is showing a contempt for it that is going just a little beyond the bounds of prudence. What is astonishing enough is that a player at North Berwick, driving from Point Garry, lately killed a seagull stone dead, his ball striking it in the head. For this there is the seagull—now stuffed—in proof. The Bangalore man does not show us his crow. All this, however, is "scarcely golf."

There was golf of good quality at the Lytham St. Anne's Meeting, where Mr. G. F. Smith and Mr. N. Macbeth, jun., led the rest of the field by a long way on the gross score list, the former returning 85 and the latter 87. Both owe heavy penalties in the nett scoring, but Mr. Smith, with five strokes added,

came very near winning the first handicap prize, with a nett 90. Mr. Cottrill, however, with thirteen strokes allowed him, just went one better, at 89 nett, and won. Mr. E. Catterall, with sixteen off, and nett 90, tied with Mr. Smith for second place, and Mr. Macbeth, at nett 93, headed a long list of ties for the important position of fourth. At Aldeburgh the winter medal for the lowest nett score went to Mr. H. Mossop, with eleven strokes allowed, and nett 82. The Newson Garrett cup, on the second day of the meeting, was won at a stroke less by Mr. K. S. Anderson, with thirteen strokes handicap. His return was good enough considering the strong wind, and he won the cup with no less than five strokes to spare. A meeting that promised to have a certain share of interest for the Southern golfer was the business meeting of the Leven Thistle Club, for on the agenda paper was a proposal to make a recommendation to the authorities who regulate the charges for visitors playing on the green to reduce the price of a day's golf. Two shillings a day, the present charge, is rather high for a visitor who is making this the resort of his summer holidays, and these watering-places on the Forth are ever growing in popularity. But the meeting could bring itself to recommend no more than that the two-shilling charge should be reduced to one in all months except the summer months. Probably the good people of Leven are quite right, for even at this price the green is all too crowded, but it will continue to strike the summer visitor as "hard lines."

Lord Crewe's Mishap.



Photo. Lafayette, THE EARL OF CREWE. 179, New Bond St.

A MELANCHOLY interest attaches to the portrait of Lord Crewe by reason of the unfortunate accident in the hunting field which has come upon him lately. Lord Crewe, who was born in 1858, is best known to the public in connection with his tenure of the office of Viceroy of Ireland, from 1892 to 1895, a period during which the accidents of political feeling threw many difficulties in his way. Of those difficulties many humorous stories are told in Irish Society; but this is, perhaps, hardly the time to tell them afresh. Rather should we express a heartfelt desire for his speedy recovery. Apart from all questions of politics, all English men and women must always have an affectionate regard for Lord Crewe as his father's son; for Richard Monckton Milnes, M.P. for Pontefract from 1837 to 1863, was one of the most scholarly and delightful men of his generation.

OUR PORTRAIT ILLUSTRATION.

MRS. HARRY McCALMONT, whose portrait appears on the frontispiece, is the youngest daughter of General Sir Henry Percival de Bathe, and widow of Mr. Atmar Fanning. She became the wife of Mr. H. McCalmont, M.P., last season. Her sisters are Mrs. Archdall, Mrs. Harry Lawson, and Lady Crossley, all very smart members of Society and much admired. Mr. and Mrs. McCalmont are wintering in Egypt.



"Peter the Great."

THE chief difficulty in writing of a production at the Lyceum Theatre is to be just to the others; to escape from being led away by the traditions, the glamour, the fame of the theatre and its director; to be as severe and impartial with its plays and players as if unknown and unproved aspirants were under analysis. To be fair, the highest standard of all should be applied here, and efforts that might be allowed to pass muster elsewhere may be unworthy of the experience, the opportunities, the prestige of the Lyceum. In justice to other young authors who are fighting their way to the front, it is necessary to treat Mr. Laurence Irving as though he were not the son of his father, and as though his first important play had not been presented at the foremost English theatre in the world. So with reluctance it must be said that "Peter the Great" is a poor play—in many respects a clever piece of writing, but a poor play. There is a distinct sense of character, of the expression of varied emotion, in the work, and this is much; but the vehicle in which these qualities are displayed is very faulty. In short, "Peter the Great" is not dramatic. It shows many signs of dramatic instinct, shows them clearly enough for one to ask the young author to go on, but when everything has been said, his present work is not worthy of the theatre, or of the leading members of its company.

For the first three of the five acts the action is hardly commenced. True, Mr. Irving has contrived in them to make clear the subtleties of his two chief characters, Peter the Great and his son Alexis. But in the drawing of his portraits he has made a fatal mistake from the point of view of good craftsmanship. The only way to give an audience a proper understanding of the motives that actuate the men and women on the stage, to put an audience "inside them," so to speak, that they may appreciate the conduct that springs from the dispositions and emotions of the actors in the mimic life before them, is for the dramatist to lay bare the characters of his creations through the medium of dramatic action, to let their deeds speak for them, to show their development by what they do. In a novel the author may build up his puppets by long analysis and careful dissection; he may open their brains and put their thoughts into words without incongruity or outrage of the canons of art. But on the stage these methods fail. Long speeches that are only of value to define the character and conscience of the speakers, worst of all soliloquies that explain motives and reasons—motives and reasons that should be demonstrated by incident—are workmanship so faulty that it were cruel kindness to pass them over.

These are the faults of "Peter the Great." Some may deem the falsification of history unpardonable, but that, I hold,



Photo. by H. S. Mendelssohn,

MRS. BROWN POTTER.

Pembroke Crescent, W.

matters not at all so long as the play is dramatic. For three long acts we get no further than an insight of the struggle between the domineering and dominating Peter, Czar of Russia, and his weak and womanly son, Alexis. Peter's whole life is filled with one thought—the good of his country. He would have her great, enlightened, prosperous, freed from the savagery and the barbarism that hamper her in her rivalry with the nations of the West. But he himself in the pursuit of this noble ideal follows savage and barbaric ways; in his desire to emancipate Russia he has forgotten that very necessary prelude, the emancipation of himself. With the highest motives, or motives that he really believes to be high—though, of course, they are first and foremost dictated by a colossal egotism—he tortures and slaughters and crushes his subjects with a callous disregard of humanity to individuals in his mission of humanitarianism; it is a curious kind of altruism, that is yet quite natural in such a man.

His son Alexis loathes his methods and disgusts his father by his preference for the court of love, and for the pleasures of reflection. Many times the Czar tries to wean him from these weaknesses, to fit him to carry on his own great work, but all in vain. At length Alexis, wearied of Peter's brutalities, and longing for rest and the society of the shallow and evil woman whom he has invested with the attributes of an angel, flies in hiding to Naples. Meanwhile, Peter has come to the conclusion that the weakness and pusillanimity of his heir is a danger and a menace to the future of his Empire; that the great work he has begun will fall to pieces in the nerveless hands of the effeminate Czarewitsch. He lacerates his father's heart because of his duty as Emperor, and prepares himself for a filial sacrifice on the altar of his country's welfare. A second son has been born to him; to him must the destinies of Russia be confided, but to this Alexis would be a never-ceasing danger. So Alexis must die. He is persuaded to return to Russia, is placed upon his "trial," and is condemned to death. Here we get the first glimpse of real drama that has been vouchsafed to us. The Emperor sits in the court, carving a model of one of his beloved boats. He writhes beneath the fervid denunciation of his son, whom he cannot silence because his curses and his prophecies have a fascination for him. Up in the gallery sits Alexis' mother, Eudoxia, Peter's divorced wife. This has a poignant suggestion of its own, but the dramatist has not availed himself fully of the opportunity given by the presence of the prisoner's mother. Nevertheless, the scene is a fine and stirring one, and atones for much of the inaction that has preceded it. In the last act we have a long interview between father and son, in which they are drawn nearer together than ever before. Alexis is led out to be poisoned, and Peter, at that moment learning of the death of his new heir, kneels praying as the curtain falls.

The character of Catherine is introduced, but has no bearing on the play; yet we are very grateful for her, notwithstanding, for Catherine, according to Mr. Irving, is a very delightful creature—a rough diamond with a heart of gold. She spends her time in persuading Peter to mercy, and, incidentally, amusing the audience. As played by Miss Ellen Terry, Catherine is a very lovable, lively, and lovely woman; when she is on the stage the gloom disappears, and the theatre is filled with brightness. As Peter, Sir Henry Irving, though a little indistinct at times, acts with that magnetic attraction he possesses in so extraordinary a degree. The struggle between the Emperor and the father is shown by those many little illuminating touches that are always at Sir Henry's command; in the trial scene the actor proves, if proof be necessary, that his powers are absolutely unimpaired.

A newcomer from America, Mr. Robert Taber, has proved himself a worthy acquisition to the Lyceum stage; he has romance, restraint, passion, fire; he has manner and repose; his delivery of the long and trying speech denouncing the Emperor was admirable. Mr. Mackintosh has the only other part of any real importance in the play—that of an unscrupulous adviser of Peter—and in this the actor is worthy of his reputation, and no higher praise could be given. There is no need to dwell on the completeness of the *ensemble* or the perfection of detail. These go without saying at the Lyceum Theatre.

DRAMATIC NOTES.

IT would be almost supererogatory to add much more to the torrents of ink already shed in praise of the pantomime at Drury Lane; but it must be said that this Niagara of laudation was thoroughly deserved, for a more beautiful, gorgeous, and amusing "annual" has never been presented even at the National Theatre, which means London, which means anywhere on earth. Words are really useless when so indescribable a spectacle as that of the ballet and procession of orchids is in question. Effects at once so poetical, so tasteful, so dazzlingly rich, and so kaleidoscopic, can certainly not have justice done to them by any mere pen-picture. A preamble of this kind, in which something is described as indescribable, is generally followed by a lengthy description; but, scorning tradition, we will content ourselves with the declaration that the seemingly impossible has been achieved, that the splendours provided by the late Sir Augustus Harris have been eclipsed by Mr. Arthur Collins.

In a different way, the last scene, that of the Coronation of the Prince, is just as superbly handsome and striking as the feast of orchids. The dresses here are those of courtiers, pages, military attendants, men-at-arms, and all the appanages of the Court. They mount a staircase that brings them to the stage level, and when the scene is one of extraordinary brilliancy and animation, and we think that all is over, the stage descends, the whole spectacle changes, there is a new *coup d'œil* even more beautiful than the last. In this scene there is a mass of vari-coloured ostrich-feather fans of huge size, and, as in the orchid ballet, there are the twenty members of the Grizolati aerial troupe flying gracefully overhead, and lending a fairy-like touch to the magnificent *ensemble*.

These are the greatest scenes of all, but there are several others of only less splendour, notably the lively and pretty fair and the lovely panorama, so fanciful and so beautifully painted. It is the accepted thing to say that a pantomime was not funny on Boxing Night, but that it will doubtless improve in the future. A good many commentators fell into this mistake with "The Babes in the Wood," which was really the funniest pantomime on its first performance that we have had for a good many years, and that without a suggestion of vulgarity. There is one thing that might, perhaps, be omitted, and that is the mock prayers of the Babes. Any suggestion of parodying sacred things is distasteful to a good many whose ideas are by no means strait-laced, especially in an entertainment for children.

Miss Ada Blanche is once again the "principal boy," and is as dashing and pleasing as before; Miss Violet Robinson is a refined and pretty heroine; Messrs. Dan Leno and Herbert Campbell are the Babes, and are as grotesquely whimsical and uproariously humorous—and there is no vulgarity to spoil the impression—as these popular people are expected to be. Mr. Glover's music is vivacious and tuneful, and everything that pantomime music should be; Mr. Arthur Sturges's "book" is witty and contains many more ideas than we usually find in compositions of the kind.

"Cinderella" at the Garrick Theatre is a pretty little affair, though not so amusing as an entertainment of this kind might be expected to be. Mr. Oscar Barrett, who is responsible for the performance, has relied for the most part on the ideas of that never-to-be-forgotten "Cinderella" he showed us at the Lyceum some years ago. But the renovated version is not the equal of that which inspired it. There is one very pretty scene, that of the heroine's boudoir, electric light being used with great effect. The ball-room is another handsome picture, where we are shown the development of dancing through various historic periods; the dresses here are tasteful and rich. Miss Helen Bertram is a Prince with a fine voice, and Miss Grace Dudley is a charming Cinderella. The comedians have by this time probably worked up the fun of the pantomime. Messrs. Harry Nicholls, John Le Hay, and Fred Kaye, could not be dull for long. Mr. Oscar Barrett's own music is refined and tuneful though not excessively hilarious, and there is an air of daintiness and grace about the whole production that will surely commend itself to paterfamilias during the holidays.

The reappearance of Mrs. Bernard Beere at the Comedy Theatre was made the occasion of an ovation, and the popular actress never acted better than in the interesting old play, "The Sheep in Wolf's Clothing," which also has the great advantage of the services of Mr. Henry Neville, whose virility and whole-souled acting are a much-needed example to a large number of his juniors. The entertainment at the Comedy is a very excellent one, and the idyllic "One Summer's Day" is even sweeter and prettier on a second hearing than on the first.

Mr. Wyndham and Mr. Tree have replied in no uncertain terms to the indictment of the profession by Mr. Clement Scott, and the controversy has so far gone decidedly against the detractor.

Mr. Beerbohm Tree has secured a new modern four-act play by Mr. H. V. Esmond, the author of "One Summer's Day," entitled "My Lady Virtue," which may follow "Julius Caesar" at Her Majesty's Theatre. Mr. Tree is also credited with the purchase of the English rights of "Cyrano de Bergerac," the new drama which has caused a positive furore in Paris, where it is described as worthy of Molière, Hugo, and even Shakespeare. Perhaps the Parisians will forgive the insularism of that "even."

Mr. Arthur Collins has almost decided that "The Forty Thieves" shall form the subject of next year's pantomime at Drury Lane, though "Jack and the Beanstalk" holds second place in his favour.

Mr. Seymour Hicks will leave the Gaiety on the conclusion of the run of "The Circus Girl," and will play in Mr. Charles Brookfield's version of the French farce, "Jalouse," when Mr. George Edwardes produces it at the Duke of York's Theatre, which cannot be until after next Easter, when the house passes into his hands.

Mr. Pinero's new play, "Trelawney of the Wells," is due at the Court Theatre on the 20th inst. Rose Trelawney, the heroine, is an actress whose hand has been asked in marriage by the son of the Vice-Chancellor of the period, about 1860. The Vice-Chancellor invites her to his house to "put her through her paces," in order to discover whether her breeding entitles her to join his family. We are led to expect a striking study of the contrast between the manners of the aristocracy and the Bohemians of the time. Miss Irene Vanbrugh will play Rose, which seems to suggest that the refinement of the actress will be at least the equal of that of the Vice-Chancellor. The Earl of Rosslyn—whose *nom-de-l'œuvre* is Mr. James Erskine—will be the son, and Mr. Dion Boucicault the Vice-Chancellor.

Mrs. Brown Potter—of whom a portrait is given in this issue—has cancelled the Continental tour which she intended to make, and we may now hope to see her in London again at no distant date.

Farmers' Field Meetings.

OCCUPYING an intermediate place between the agricultural meeting and the flower show, the so-called field meetings of farmers' clubs probably give more pleasure to the class which is supposed to directly benefit by such functions than do any other. For in the majority of cases the agricultural meeting has reached too grand a scale; and though, from the financial point of view, its last state may be considerably better than the first, yet, at the same time, its original aim—to be considered the annual rendezvous of country-folk interested in purely agricultural pursuits—has been nearly entirely lost. Competition in the way of gate money returns has resulted in frantic endeavours to attract the excursionist, and this, in turn, has led to the introduction of such side-shows as military tournaments, the engagement of expensive bands, motor-car exhibits, fireworks, and other inducements, which, while they succeed in drawing the tripper, rather defeat the real aim and object of these institutions. True, there has been a great increase in the value of the prizes awarded, but this, again, has

proved a mixed blessing, since it has, undoubtedly, had the effect of bringing on the scene the large professional breeder and exhibitor, to the exclusion of the local man. The flower show, perhaps, however elaborate, can hardly be said to conflict with the interests of the agricultural portion of the community; but here, again, disturbing influences have been at work, with the result that the up-to-date flower show has become an *olla-podrida* of dog-tents, horse-leaping, bicycle-racing, and sheepdog trials, the flower and vegetable exhibits—with the exception of the stalls of the big seedsmen—being conspicuous for their paucity. To find, therefore, the representative show, as far as ordinary agriculture is concerned, it will be necessary to turn to the annual field meetings held by the farmers' clubs, more particularly in the Midland Counties, which, notwithstanding the attractions of their more powerful rivals, were never in a more flourishing state. Originally founded as a kind of home parliament for the local farmer, and embracing the settlement of such widely-divergent questions as the destruction of sparrows and the judging of cart-foals, the field meeting now includes the following items in its programme:—Competitions in ploughing and hedging.—The former is, as a rule, divided into two classes: first, a prize to the man who shall plough half-an-acre of land in the best manner, and not less than 6in. deep, time to be taken into consideration, but not to exceed four hours; secondly, under the same conditions as to time, to the man who shall, with three horses abreast, and double plough, plough one acre of land in the best manner, and not less than 5in. deep.

The hedging competition consists in the most satisfactory ditching and plashing of one rood of hedging under four hours. In this particular, interesting exhibition performances will frequently be given by the band of hedgers employed on some large estate. These men, headed by their "captain," will march on to the ground with their bill and pruning hooks, range themselves in their proper places with military precision, and polish off a rood of hedging in an incredibly short space of time. Long Service.—This competition for a prize of £10 or more, to be equally divided amongst the male and female servants of the members of the

appointed traps to which they are harnessed, correct in every detail, from the lamps to the whip-bucket? Gentlemen who send the pick of their own stables and coach-houses—not for competition—often find that their turn-outs compare unfavourably with those of their farmers. One of the most popular items in the day's amusement is the block-test competition. An entrance fee of 1s. admits one into a shed containing a live beast—a bullock, pig, or sheep—and prizes are awarded to those competitors who succeed in judging its actual or nearest dead weight, the animal being slaughtered the same evening, and fairly dressed. It is considered the correct thing for sweet-heating couples to go in together, and to make a joint-stock guess, while the rural policeman, who takes the entrance money, cracks jokes outside. The horses shown are very much of the same class as those exhibited at small agricultural meetings all over the country—that is, there are prizes for the best cart mare with her foal, the best two year old cart gelding or filly, the best yearling colt or filly likely to make a hunter, and the best yearling hackney colt or filly, etc., all being the property of members. In conclusion, it may be noted that a prosperous farmers' club is nearly always in a position to give something like £200 in prize money, and there are practically no expenses in a show itself. The show ground is roughly railed in, a few tents erected, while a line of market waggons, to sit in, which an extra charge of sixpence is made, serve as grand stands. Distinguished patronage such clubs possess in plenty, but the committee of management and the judging of the competitions always remain in the hands of the farmers themselves.

H. G. ARCHER.

BETWEEN THE FLAGS.

THERE were two good days' sport under National Hunt Rules at Hurst Park last week, and, as is usual at these popular and well-managed meetings, plenty of interesting racing. Count Schomberg's three year old brother, Up Guards, won another Maiden Hurdle Race, and is evidently going to make a very useful horse at the game. He can go a bit on the flat, and, like most Irish horses, is a beautiful jumper, so that there is probably a distinguished career in front of him. It is a remarkable thing that we can neither breed nor train good jumpers in England now, and that they all have to come from the other side of St. George's Channel. I think that "Vigilant" hit the nail on the head in the *Sportsman* of Monday, the 27th of last month. That honest slave, Barcalwhey, won the Christmas Handicap Steeplechase, and it is likely enough that his last month's victories were partly due to the fact that he was thoroughly fit when the season began. He is a good, game, staying horse, and a fine jumper, and he will always be useful in his own class.

Five runners turned out for the Suffolk and Berkshire Plate, one of the new welter flat races, as its name denotes. This was won by that exceedingly useful all-round performer, Knight of Rhodes, also an Irishman, and it is very satisfactory to see this good horse beginning another season still sound and well. That these new races will add a great attraction to winter meetings, if they get the chance, is evident; but it is also plain that they will never make any headway so long as the National Hunt rule concerning the distribution of added money is

left as it is; and the sooner it is altered the better. I suppose, though, it is hopeless to expect any common sense from the body which controls this branch of racing.

At Manchester, on Friday, the Trafford Park Handicap Steeplechase dwindled down to only two starters, of whom Ford of Fyne started at 2 to 1 on, and won as he liked. On the second day, the useful Athel Roy, who has disappointed his followers on several occasions lately, consented to win a race, and as he had St. Mathurin, to whom he was giving 10lb., Grimp, The Panther, and Penny Hill, once the best chaser in England, behind him, the form was probably good. There was a big field for the New Year's Handicap Hurdle Race, which was won by that extraordinary horse I.O.U., who keeps on running in steeplechases, hurdle races, and flat races with the greatest impartiality, and never seems to get a rest. There was nothing else of much interest at the last meeting of the year.

I hear from Newmarket that Court Ball is shaping well in his education over hurdles, and jumping may very likely give this arrant rogue confidence, in which case he is sure to be very useful indeed over "the sticks." I also hear of a very likely three year old in Ireland called Lord Tara, who was put up at Mr. Briscoe's sale in Ireland last week, and bought in. I recollect a very useful horse of the same name belonging to Captain Arthur Crofton, of the 8th Hussars, in the seventies. He was brought over to run in a race at Aldershot, for which he started a hot favourite, his trainer, poor Harry Linde, telling myself and everyone else that he was sure to win. I had the satisfaction of beating him on a horse of my own, though, I remember. There will be racing at Lingfield on Friday and Saturday, where Melton Prior, Crystal Palace, Pope's Eye, Westmeath, and Sam may run well in whatever races they start for.

THE SCALTBACK STUD.

OF the many stud farms which have come into existence during the last ten years, there is none which appears to have a more successful future before it than Mr. John Hammond's Scaltnack Stud, and this I say because of the high quality and good blood of its inmates. Its originator and

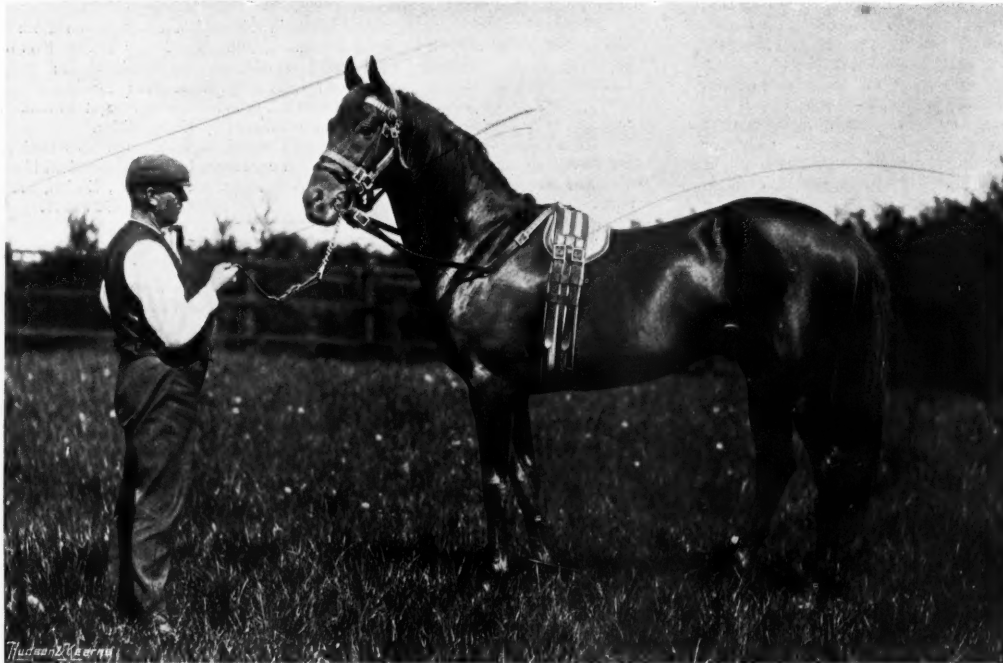


Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

THE SCALTBACK STUD; LAUREATE II.

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club who have been twenty years and upwards in the service of the same master or mistress or successor, always proves a difficult task for the judges to decide. It must be remembered that the longest number of years' service does not necessarily carry off the prize, various other particulars, such as character, nature of the work performed, and age at time of first entering service, having to be taken into consideration. As an exception to the sweeping assertion one so often hears made, to the effect that continuity of service, domestic or otherwise, is now a thing of the past, the following figures may be of interest:—In a field meeting held last autumn, out of a total of 200 club members, including country gentlemen and tradespeople, there were 88 entries for this prize, the total number of years' service of the competitors amounting to 2,706½ years, or an average service of 30½ years. Among them there was a farm hand who had served the same family for 68 years without a break, while there were five instances of continuous service between 50 and 60 years, twelve of between 40 and 50, and seventeen of between 30 and 40. The competitions in table poultry, eggs, and root crops, the latter confined to farms under 200 acres in extent, do not call for any detailed comment, and we accordingly turn to the horse-leaping and turn-outs, which form the spectacular portion of the entertainment. Here, as far as the open classes are concerned, the result is generally a foregone conclusion. Horse-leaping as it is practised in the country at the present day is really more or less trick-jumping. The horses competing are not *bona fide* hunters in any sense of the word—it is doubtful if they have ever been galloped over a fair hunting country, but from the time they left "school" have been ridden incessantly at swinging gates, stiles, and artificial water jumps, until they are considered well enough drilled for the pot-hunting campaign. However, every season there are one or two horses that achieve a position quite above the ruck, and as these will travel round and do all the local shows in turn, never venturing out of their class, the news that Whistling Coon or Red Ensign is on the spot is apt to deprive the competition of all interest, bar that of seeing some excellent jumping.

At all field meetings the turn-outs bear ample evidence of the truth of two sketches which once appeared in *Punch*, depicting the old-fashioned farmer's trap when times were good, and that of his up-to-date prototype when times are supposed to be so very bad. What could be nicer than the perfect-stepping cobs which simply flash round the ground, and what could be smarter than the well-

owner is not only a very clever man, but also a very lucky one, and his fortunes reached their zenith when he found himself at one and the same time possessed of two such sterling good race-horses as Florence and St. Gaten.

In 1889 Mr. Hammond bought the Scalback Farm, near Newmarket, with the intention of turning it into a suitable place for the breeding of bloodstock. For this purpose he pulled down most of the then existing farm buildings, and replaced them with the present boxes. He also had the land divided off into paddocks, and the result of his work may now be seen in one of the most convenient and best arranged stud farms in the kingdom. He has very wisely not gone in for having too many mares, but those which he has are a very high-class and carefully-selected lot.

There are few of my readers who will not remember that beautiful mare Florence, by Wisdom out of Enigma, by The Rake, who won the Cambridgeshire in 1884. This mare was foaled in 1880, and during her career she won a great number of handicaps over all sorts of distances, and under big weights. In fact, when she won the Cambridgeshire as a four year old she was carrying 9st. 11lb., the biggest weight ever carried to victory in that race. She also won the Baden-Baden Grand Prize, the Manchester Cup, and many other races. She is a beautifully bred mare, combining the blood of those celebrated brothers Stockwell and Ratanplan in her sire, with that of Newminster and The Rake in her dam. She was bred in 1880 by Mr. A. Hoole, so that she is now seventeen years old, and although she has never yet bred anything so good as herself, one or more of her daughters is very likely to do so.

A year younger than Florence is St. Gaten, a bay colt by Rotherhill or The Rover (the latter undoubtedly) out of St. Editha, by Kingley Vale. On his sire's side this horse is thus a grandson of Blair Athol, whilst on his dam's he goes back to the Agnes family; so that it is not wonderful that he was the hard staying race-horse that he was. John Hammond was indeed a fortunate man to have two such animals in his stable at the same time as these two, and I fancy that when the mare won the Cambridgeshire it made out the colt to be a real wonder, considering what he could do with her at home. He was a real good horse on the turf, and won, among other races, the Gold Vase, the Gold Cup, and the Alexandra Plate, at Ascot, the Cesarewitch, carrying 8st. 10lb., and two Jockey Club cups. He was never beaten in his first two seasons, and his only defeat as a four year old was when he ran nowhere, carrying 9st. 10lb., in the Cambridgeshire won by Plaisanterie. Unfortunately he is now at the Imperial Stud at Gratz, in Germany.

Another useful horse that did good service in Mr. Hammond's colours, and has since then sired such useful winners as Literature, Lantwit, Lo Ben, Aspinall, and that good three year old, Northern Farmer, is Laureate II., who is by Petrarch out of Macaria, by Macaroni out of Feronia, by Thormanby. This is a very nicely bred horse, with plenty of hard blood on his dam's side to counteract the soft Orlando blood on his sire's. He was a very speedy race-horse, too, as he won the Cambridgeshire in 1889, carrying 7st. 9lb., and two years afterwards the Hunt Cup at Ascot, with 7st. 12lb. in the saddle; and as he is only eleven years old, it is more than probable that he has a great future before him.

Insignia, by Blair Athol out of Decoration, who was a very speedy mare for five furlongs when in training, was bred by Mr. Hammond in 1882, whilst



Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

DOUBLE EVENT, AND FOAL BY ORVIETO.

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Corbeille (1886), by Bruce out of Corvelale, by Wenlock, also won a number of races, and may breed a good winner yet.

There are some charming young mares in this stud, amongst whom I liked especially Mantlet (1890), by Bend Or out of Blue Mantle, by Truant (son of Saunterer); Galoche (1889), by Galliard out of Lottie, by Wellingtonia; Lady Beatrix (1891), by Salisbury out of Fair Lilian, by Muncaster; Double Event (1889), by St. Gaten out of Florence—what a brood mare this ought to make; and Gay Polly (1890), by St. Gaten out of Polaris, by Craig Millar.

These mares are all full of the bluest blood, and although this stud is not a very big one, and has not been long in existence, I shall be surprised if we do not soon see another Florence, or even, perhaps, a second St. Gaten, bred there.

OUTPOST.

ODDS AND EVENTS.—I.

THE element which forms the basis of all games of chance enters also into racing, but in a much more involved and complicated manner. This element is an assemblage of conflicting chances, of which now one, now another, proves successful. The conditions which determine which event shall be successful vary according to the nature of the game. In racing, one of these conditions is formed by the unequal distribution of weights carried by the horses in competition with one another. The nature and training of the animals themselves constitute other chance factors, which, moreover, are not mathematically determinable. The science of handicapping, however, dominates these elements to a certain extent, so that, as far as the present purpose is concerned, it will not be necessary to take them into consideration.

Games of chance are all more or less capable of being systematised by aid of the calculus of probability, and the question naturally arises whether racing cannot be dealt with in the same way, and, if so, how, and with what amount of success? The first point to be considered is the relation between the events as they happen and the odds obtainable about such events; in other words, are the true odds in accordance with the betting odds? For instance, in supporting a single number out of a possible thirty-six in roulette, the odds offered by the banker are 35 to 1, which correctly represent the probability of such a number winning, viz., 1 in 36; in other words, once in thirty-six times the number chosen will, in the long run, be successful. Again, in backing a column of twelve numbers, any one of which may be a winning number, 2 to 1 is offered, which again correctly represents the probability of such an event happening.

That such events do happen as expressed by the probability fraction has been amply confirmed by De Moivre, Laplace, Poise, and others, and it will, perhaps, be as well to cite the result obtained by the first-named mathematician. He found that if the real probability of an event is three-fifths, the odds are 1,000 to 1 that in 25,550 trials, of which an exact calculation would give 15,330 as three-fifths, the event will occur not more than 15.811 times and not less than 14,819 times, i.e., the deviation from 15,330, or three-fifths of the whole, will not exceed one-fiftieth of the whole number of trials. This shows that over a fair number of trials the coincidence is very close, and becomes more and more so as the trials are increased in number.

These results, in the case of roulette, are rendered less accurate, from the player's standpoint, by the fact that one chance in every thirty-six is claimed by the bank. Yet, in spite of this, it is possible by adopting the 1, 2, 3 system, with certain modifications, to become a certain winner.

In racing, however, the position as compared with roulette will be improved one degree by taking for the sequence of chances only first favourites. By this



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act of selection, whereby advantage is taken of the keenest judgment, a comparative certainty is reached—namely, that out of 100 events forty will prove successful.

This has been the winning average of the past ten years, a fact in itself sufficient to warrant the expectation that future events will resemble the past as long as the present conditions of racing hold good.

The problem, therefore, becomes this—are the odds offered by the fielders against first favourites strictly in accordance with the running; or to what extent do they deviate therefrom? For if more than a fractional discrepancy exists between them in the long run it is impossible to win.

Careful investigation, spread over a number of years, has shown that such a discrepancy does exist, and that if every favourite had been backed for an identical and a fixed sum, the book-maker would have made a considerable profit. To trace this to its cause, the problem must be fined down for a time by looking a little closely into the races themselves, grouping them in the order of running; that is to say, the first race of the day, the second, third, and so on. The following figures show the number of winning and losing first favourites classified as mentioned:—

First favourites under National Hunt Rules.—November to March, 1893-94.

	Winners.	Losers.	Greatest successive number of losers.
1st Race	44	32	5
2nd "	27	49	16
3rd "	26	50	9
4th "	27	49	11
5th "	34	41	9
6th "	37	32	6

Total . . . 195 . . . 253

First favourites under Jockey Club Rules.—Season 1894.

	Winners.	Losers.	Greatest successive number of losers.
1st Race	77	99	6
2nd "	62	114	13
3rd "	60	116	8
4th "	67	109	7
5th "	65	111	8
6th "	64	107	8
7th "	51	49	5

Total . . . 446 . . . 705

First favourites under National Hunt Rules.—November to March, 1894-95.

	Winners.	Losers.	Greatest successive number of losers.
1st Race	24	24	5
2nd "	17	31	7
3rd "	16	32	5
4th "	17	31	11
5th "	14	34	10
6th "	21	24	7

Total . . . 109 . . . 176



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MARES AND FOALS.

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First favourites under Jockey Club Rules.—Season 1895.

	Winners.	Losers.	Greatest successive number of losers.
1st Race	74	109	10
2nd "	75	108	7
3rd "	68	115	16
4th "	66	117	13
5th "	70	113	11
6th "	93	88	11
7th "	46	56	6

Total . . . 492 . . . 706

The foregoing figures have not been selected arbitrarily, but as truly typifying the results which have been found to obtain over an extended number of years. They may, therefore, be taken as being thoroughly representative. A valuable key to the position is indicated by these figures, especially those showing the maximum sequence of losers, for they demonstrate the average, and the fluctuations from the average.

If the average of forty winners out of 100 races were maintained in its lowest terms, that is two winners out of every five, a great difficulty would be removed, and, without going any further, a good payable system could be established. But this is not the case, and a unique difficulty is presented by the wide variations which occur. On referring to the first table, it will be observed that, whereas in the first race of the day the number of consecutive losers never exceeded 5, in the second race the disastrous run down of 16 was encountered.

Both on the flat and over obstacles the first race of the day is the most successful, the number of consecutive losers averaging only six. The third, fourth, and fifth races exhibit greater fluctuations from the average, while the sixth and seventh are far more consistent, though not to the same extent as the first. In consequence of this the proportion of winners is not so good, differing by as much as 12 per cent. On these grounds alone, therefore, the first, sixth, and seventh races are the most payable, if the odds *Alainak's* are in accordance with the running. If the odds in the case of the second, third, and fourth races correctly represent the proportion of winners, the large capital necessary to tide over the wide deviations from the average which continually recur render the profits almost insignificant.

C. E. ALLEN.



Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

THE SCALTBACK STUD HOUSE AND BOXES.

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MACPHERSON'S MONSTER.

THERE was always a certain little jealousy between my wife and Mrs. James Macpherson as to whose husband should catch the bigger fish. We were old friends, and, quite by accident, had taken lodges on opposite sides of the same—a very well-known—river for the autumn salmon fishing. About once a week we would dine together at the little mansion of one or the other, and it was a point of honour on these occasions with the wives of either of us to outdo the magnificence of the last banquet by the size of the salmon that should be served as the fish course. Macpherson and his wife being as pronouncedly Scotch as my wife and myself are aggressively English, this rivalry assumed some of the aspects and dimensions of an international matter, and was never at a more acute stage than when we dined with the Macphersons on the third of last October. Moderately good only in size, shape, and condition was the salmon that Mrs. Macpherson presented to us that evening on the dinner table; but by way of compensation for the mediocre qualities of this fish *in esse*, Macpherson had a truly terrific story about a fish *in fosse*, which he had hooked that very day, and which should have been his—and partly, gastronomically speaking, ours—but for some very untoward accident, such as is liable to overtake the disciples of Walton. It appeared that, fishing from a boat in mid-stream, Macpherson had that day hooked a "monster."

"A monster!" his wife softly repeated, in pious conjugal echo.

"A monster," Macpherson reaffirmed. "He ran me out at once 40yds. from the reel. You know the place well—down below the White Rocks. You know what a boil there is of the water there! Well, I worked him up—you know one cannot follow a fish there—right up through that boil of the water into the pool again; and then he caught sight of us, and went down again, like a—well, a tarpon. He screamed the line off the reel, he did!"

"Really! And then?"

"Ah! And then! Then I had to fight him up again. Hand by hand and inch by inch I had to reel him in, while the men kept the boat fairly steady at the pool's tail, he fighting



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

GAFFED AND LANDED.

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like a demon all the way. I believe there was some exceptional intelligence in this fish—he remembered that we were waiting for him up above. And then, when I had got him up to within some 15yds. of us, he would not budge. Not an inch would he give, for all the strain I put on him. And then—I had been spinning with my line, you know, and it had got worn a little just at the part that came to the reel then—well, it snapped. I fell over backwards into the boat—broke Geordie's pipe. Geordie swore at me in the most shameful fashion. I'm thinking I'll have to discharge Geordie—do you happen to know another boatman? And away went the fish with 15yds. of my good line."

"What cruel luck," I said, with sympathy.

"Was it not? Was it not?" said Macpherson, with a gulp of whisky and water. "And he was a monster—a monster," he affirmed, eagerly.

"A monster," said his wife again, in faithful echo.

"What fly had you on?"

"Silver Doctor."

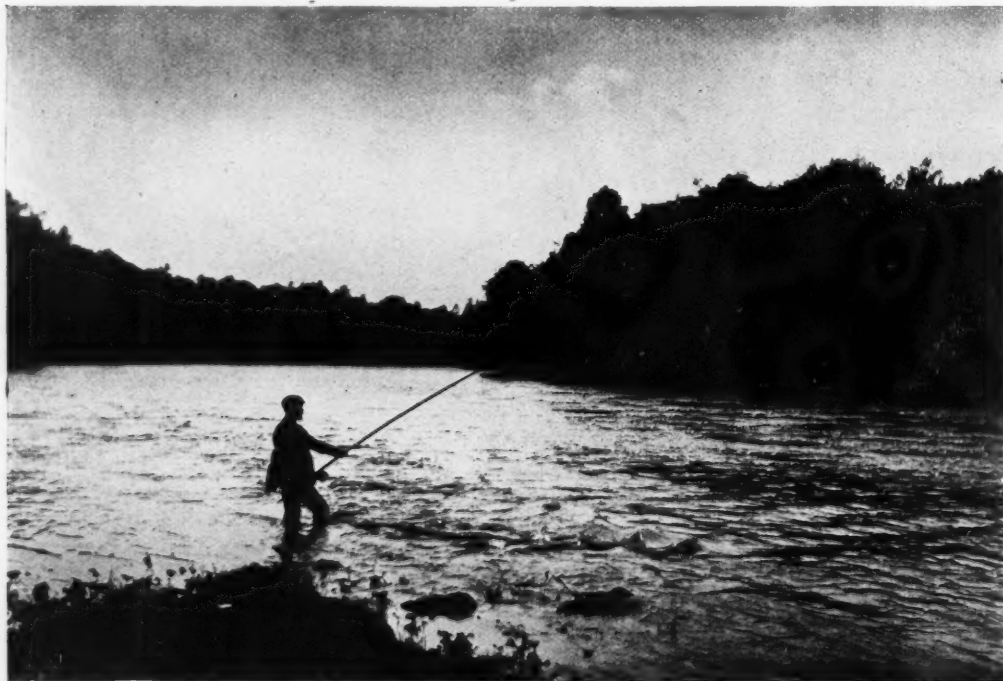
"Did you see the fish clearly?"

"Not to say clearly," Macpherson admitted with candour—he is the soul of honesty—"but enough, just enough to know, to be sure, that he was a monster—a real monster—thirty, no doubt, and I shouldn't wonder if he were forty, pounds."

"Really!" I said. "So large as that?"

"Aye," he repeated again. "A monster."

After we had let Macpherson talk his fill about this terrible loss, and his wife had discussed the best manner of cooking a fish of these dimensions, the two of them seemed nearly as comforted as if they had actually landed, gaffed, and dined off him. Mrs. Macpherson was an excellent photographer, and had that day succeeded in taking three capital pictures—one just as the boat was shoving off, a second as the fish that we were actually engaged on with our knives and forks was being GAFFED AND LANDED, and the third representing some stage or other of the battle between Macpherson and the monster. Naturally we were not able to see the results of these



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

CASTING WITH MY FLIES.

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photos, as they had only been taken that day, but I have seen them since, and can testify that they are excellent, though what the dickens Macpherson is doing with his rod at that angle, when he is playing a salmon, especially a monster, I cannot conceive. I made some reference to this to Macpherson and his wife, but it was so ill received that I recognised his methods of dealing with a fish to be no business of mine, and refrained from further comment, for fear of aggravating the international difficulty. We had a very pleasant evening, and parted early.

Two days later I was out fishing by myself, with a small telescope gaff in my pocket, from the bank. I had on stocking waders only, for the water had run down rather clear. I was scarcely expecting any sport with salmon, and had equipped myself for sea trout rather, in case any should be on the run. I went out along a gravelly, stony spit of LAND JUTTING OUT INTO THE RIVER, and there my attention was attracted by a singular appearance in the clear water. The ripple made it difficult to distinguish exactly, but it certainly appeared to me as if I could see a long line or cord running through the water, sometimes floating, sometimes sunken, and at first my notion was that I had chanced on a night line. However, the waving and uncertain motion of the line scarcely seemed to favour this idea. At all events, I said to myself, I will cast out and try



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

AS THE BOAT WAS SHOVING OFF.

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to see what it is. Casting once or twice with my flies, and failing to hook it, I soon saw I should do no good by this method, and in two minutes had put on a small Devon minnow instead. With this I caught the floating line at the very first attempt, and, drawing it to me, found it, to my surprise, to be a finely-dressed salmon line. I knew it was not one of my own, but in a moment the idea occurred to me that I had seen the very



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

A SPIT OF LAND JUTTING OUT INTO THE RIVER.

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"neighbour" to it, as Macpherson himself might have phrased it, in his outfit, and from that, it was but a step to conjecture that this might be that very bit of line that had been broken from him by the monster. Finally, the wild but not impossible idea crossed my mind that the monster might be lurking even now under the big stone just above me in the water, and that the other end of the line might still be fastened by the Silver Doctor.

No harm in trying, at all events, I told myself; and with that I whipped off my "Devon," tied the end of the line I had rescued, as flotsam, to the line that was on my reel—the knot would not have run through loose rings, but I thought it would run through my fixed wires—and forthwith I began reeling in with all the air of having a fine salmon at the other end.

And so I had! Before the line had come quite taut to my reeling, it was suddenly taken from my control by the rush of a fish. He went up the pool, away from me. I did not trouble to follow him far on this manoeuvre, thinking I could check him, with the current to help me, if necessary. I just stood where I was and played him, but I regretted that I had no gillie, and only my small gaff with me, for there was no reasonable doubt now that I had to deal with Macpherson's monster. I played the fish gently, but, considering his monstrosity, I was surprised to find how amenable he was to the discipline of my 16ft. grilse rod. In short, in about ten minutes' time I had brought to the shore and landed with my small gaff a nice little fish—in very truth Macpherson's monster, a game little fellow of some 15lb.

Three evenings later the Macphersons were dining with us. I had been careful, in the meantime, to say nothing of my capture. The river had been bright and low, as I have said.

"Eh!" said Mrs. Macpherson to my wife, "you can be having no salmon to give us to-night. That was a bonnie little fish we had at our house the other night. Eh, but the one James lost that day—a monster!"

"A monster!" sighed Macpherson.

"A monster!" I said. My wife said nothing.

I had arranged a little comedy with the cook. When the fish course came, and the cover was removed, there, on a big dish, was the fine little fifteen-pounder, whole. Around him, symmetrically arranged by way of garnishing, was the line of my friend Macpherson, that I had saved, and in the fish's mouth was stuck, just as when I had caught him, the Silver Doctor, which I had much pleasure in introducing to Macpherson as his own come back to him.

The poor man was quite speechless. He had not a word to say about it. At first he affected some incredulity about its being his own line, but, after a little examination of it, he was too honest a man to keep that up. Then he wondered whether it were possible that his salmon, the monster, could have rubbed off the hook into the mouth of this, evidently a much smaller, one.

"On the principle of the scapegoat?" I asked, gravely; and then he saw that it would not do.

Mrs. Macpherson, meanwhile, had grown very red, and for a moment I was a little uncertain how she might take the matter. A severe aggravation of the international imbroglio threatened us. But in a minute or two her better sense prevailed. Macpherson summoned a difficult stage laugh to his face. But after a while things went better. With the first glass of champagne the humorous aspect seemed to sparkle to the surface. After a little desultory conversation, Macpherson suddenly laid down his knife and fork and went off into a roar of laughter, and, once the ice was thus broken, there was no more trouble.

"But I give you my solemn davy," he said, as he shook hands with me that night, "I believed the fish to be a monster."

"My dear Macpherson," I replied, "I know quite well you did. And I tell you another thing—that you're not the first man by many a score that has honestly believed the same of a fifteen-pounder, and less, that has broken him."

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

Partridge Driving at Holkham.—I.



Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

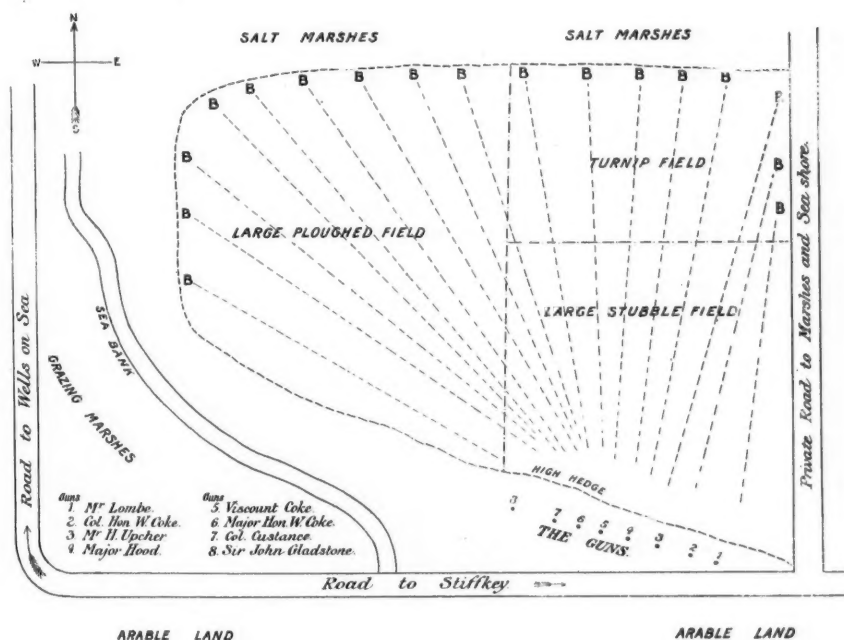
LORD LEICESTER ON THE ROAD.

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HOLKHAM, which Mr. Coke, afterwards created Earl of Leicester, converted largely from barren heaths, on which "two rabbits were quarrelling for one blade of grass," to one of the best cultivated and most remunerative, as it was also the largest, of Norfolk properties, lies on the line of coast about half-way between Hunstanton and Cromer. This is not the place to describe in detail the wonderful attractions which this property offers to game and wildfowl, or the well-judged measures by which Nature is aided in the encouragement of both. But the accompanying plan and illustrations give

some idea of the scene and method of a typical drive in the course of the shooting on December 8th. It is on ground thoroughly representative of this unique portion of the north Norfolk coast, with its fringe of "meal marshes" and sand-hills, beyond which lie the shoals and sand-banks of the shallow Northern Sea. They show part of the Holkham estate lying on the margin of the sea, and salt-marshes to the east of Holkham, in the direction of Stiffkey, where are the fine remains of Sir Nicholas Bacon's ancient hall. The arable ground on which this drive takes place consists of low, gently-rising hills, of chalk,

with a kind of loamy top, highly cultivated, and divided into big fields by thorn fences. To the north, at the top of the plan, this ground sinks into the beautiful and singular "sea moorlands," full of salt creeks, and covered with sea-lavender and crab-grass, a tract which runs parallel with the shore for some nine miles to Blakeney. These are the famous "meal marshes," over which the tide flows entirely on occasion. Beyond this, again, is a barrier of sand-hills, and beyond that the North Sea. On the west side of Wells Harbour, at Holkham itself, the whole of an exactly similar marsh has been reclaimed, drained, and the sand-hills planted, mainly by the present Lord Leicester. This reclamation swarms with game, and partridges especially may be seen in numbers, even on the fringe of sand-hills which separates the marsh from the sea. But on the sea front, shown in our map, wildfowl only haunt the salt-marshes. To the left hand, westwards, is a creek where an arm of the sea once ran up. This is now grass pasture, separated from the creek by an old "sea-bank." But it converts the left hand of the partridge ground proper into a tongue of land, with salt-marshes on one side and grazing marshes on the other. The means by which the birds on the whole of the area covered by this particular drive are brought to the guns is shown by the disposition of the beaters, marked B.B. As the ground is driven in from the sea front, and also sideways from the west front towards the grazing marshes, the birds will come mainly from two different points, some, those from the left hand, being driven across the guns; others from the north front will come straight at the guns; and there will be an



SCENE OF THE NEXT DRIVE TOWARDS THE ROAD.

intermediate flight concentric from various points of the segment between these two.

Our first illustration shows LORD LEICESTER ON THE ROAD, in the centre of the party. By no means all of this

group are guns, some, as is always the case, being tenants and neighbours, who are made welcome at these big days. He does not now shoot himself, though a few years ago he could hold his own with the best shots in England. But on these big shooting days he takes full command of all the forces engaged—guns, friends, neighbours, tenants, and two sets of beaters—and, like a good general in the field, personally directs the day. While one set of beaters are going out, and "lining up" along the front next the marshes, another set are going out at the back, southwards, to be ready to bring that ground in, and send its own stock of birds, together with all those sent over it in the first drive, back again. Thus no time is lost, and the guns can be kept busy all day.

The latter take their places in this good sport, where the birds are so numerous, and the guns are as good as any in England. The actual display of shooting driven partridges as a fine art is most interesting, apart from the skill shown in bringing the birds to the guns. These stand in line some 50yds. apart, and 25yds. behind this particular hedge. This is because the fence is too thick to see birds coming, and they must be taken as they reach it, and after. The spectators sit close under the hedge, as seen in our illustration, in front of the guns and with their backs to the birds, and make themselves useful by marking and counting the birds as they fall. A little group may be seen under the fence in front of every gun. Only the gun, his loader, and retriever are out in the open.

When the guns are placed the head keeper fires a pistol



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BUSY DOWN THE LINE.

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Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

A HIGH SHOT—LORD COKE.

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and blows his whistle. The beaters, who are all old hands, and carefully trained to their work, then advance, and converge on the field opposite to the guns, as shown in the plan, and then come on in a semi-circle.

The guns are soon **DOWN THE LINE**, and the shooting, owing partly to the height at which the birds come over in this particular drive, partly to the variety of lines of flight, is specially difficult, and interesting to watch. The thorn hedge itself is 20ft. high, and in this are oak trees of considerable size. On the left a single bird may be seen coming over above the top of the tallest oak, to the left of the outer gun. On the right centre a broken covey is crossing over the oaks by the barn, and drawing the fire of three guns. The extreme right-hand guns extend almost to the cottage whose chimney is seen over the fence. This is the **Halfway House** between Wells and Stiffkey, and stands by the road in which Lord Leicester and his guests are shown in our previous illustration. Taking the reader nearer to the scene of action, **A HIGH SHOT** shows Lord Coke, whose shooting, especially at distant and difficult shots, was much admired throughout the day, taking a very high bird to the left. Lord Coke is not only a good sportsman and a good shot, but also finds time to aid everyone who takes part in a big day at Holkham and is interested in the sport to enjoy and appreciate what is going on; or, as in the present case, to interest a much larger public by furthering the record made by the camera. **A QUICK DOUBLE** shows Mr. Henry Upcher taking two as good shots as one can imagine. Two birds coming very high directly overhead were killed so rapidly that both were falling in the air at the same time, apparently not two feet apart. Fortunately for the success of this season's shoot, the great gales of November 28th and 29th just missed the time fixed by a week; but ample evidence remained of its force. The telegraph wires in some parts were festooned with straw blown by the gale, and **LUNCHEON TIME** saw the whole party seated on the limbs of a big poplar blown down by the gale. There we may leave them for the present, noting that luncheon at Holkham aims, like everything else, at furthering sport—sandwiches and ale, and then off to the next drive, being the order of the day. In the group at luncheon, Colonel the Hon. Newman Coke, the veteran shot of the party, is in the centre. The other guns are Viscount Coke, Mr. H. Upcher, Mr. Lombe, Major the Hon. W. Coke, Sir John Gladstone, Major Hood, and Colonel Custance—a very representative Norfolk party.

C. J. CORNISH.

CORRESPONDENCE.

OWLS INVADING PIGEON-HOUSES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Until the last year or so I have been in the habit, in common, I think, with many others, of looking with pity at the corpses of the poor owls that one so often sees gibbeted, as rank offenders, on the doors of keepers' outhouses. I had regarded the owl in the light of an injured innocent, suffering, perhaps, from a more or less accidental family likeness to some members of the hawk tribe who may have deserved such a fate richly enough. But lately a circumstance has come to my knowledge that makes me look on these dead bodies with a less compassionate eye. I keep many pigeons, and it so happens that



Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

A QUICK DOUBLE—MR. H. UPCHER.

Copyright—"C. L."



Photo. by W. A. Rouch.

LUNCHEON TIME.

Copyright—"C. L."

owls are very numerous in the same neighbourhood. I now discover that the owls are in the constant habit of invading the pigeon-houses, of eating, as I am quite satisfied, the young squabs, and taking possession of their domicile, until turned out, for their own domestic uses. I think it may interest some of your readers to know this, for I believe it is an offence that is not commonly credited to the owl. I have never seen it mentioned before, though other offences, of which it is very likely quite guiltless, have often been charged against it. But if young pigeons, why not the young of many another bird? Of course it is quite likely that the dark recesses of the dove-cote may have a special attraction for owls, and that they might take no notice of birds in an open nest. At any rate, I cannot feel quite the same compassion that I used to feel for the owl's fate at the keeper's hands.—A. L. F.

IMPORTING APPLE TREES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Can you or any of your readers tell me the results of any experiments—for I presume that such experiments have been made—in importing, or re-importing, the Newtown and the Ribston pippin apples into this country? In England I believe it is the universal experience that all the trees of either of these splendid species produce no apples at all, or apples of a crabbed and uneatable nature. But surely it is probable that if young plants were imported from America, and from different parts of America, so that there should be a chance of infusing pollen of a widely different strain—which acts on fruit trees like "new blood" in the animal kingdom—into the flowering trees, a new crop of these fine apples might result. In all probability the experiment has been tried, and I should be very grateful to be given any account of it.—ENGLISHMAN.

Notes from my Diary

by mane. Sans-Gêne

MONDAY: And it fogged, and it fogged, and it fogged, all the morning, which was quite absurd, and most annoying when I particularly wanted to go out and buy something. I have serious fault to find with the weather, and in this I am not entirely alone among my countrywomen. When the roads are hard enough for bicycling, the atmosphere precludes the possibility; thus am I deprived of any exercise save that which I can find on the skating rink, where, alas and alas! I can only learn to execute "Q's" at the cost of sciatica—too dear a price to pay even for proficiency in this most graceful of all the arts. Why the Fates should have seen fit to visit anyone so young and agile with the curse of sciatica I know not, and Providence will only have squared accounts with me when it has been arranged that some of my relations should take me to the Riviera in January. To look at this dull grey sky, and think that somewhere but a few hours' journey in the distance are the glorious sunlight and blue sky, reflecting themselves in a blue sea! The worst part of it is that several women of my intimate acquaintance are preparing their clothes for a journey into the midst of these particular delights. Essie is going away in three weeks, and she is devoting herself heart and soul to her wardrobe. She is a superior person, who does not buy things at sales, and she always chooses models of to-morrow. A gown to which she is quite certain she is to devote herself exclusively at Monte Carlo is of biscuit-coloured cloth, elaborately and wonderfully strapped with some ivory lace on the bodice of quite simple detail and narrow borders of sable. Her sable toque she has had trimmed with large rosettes of ivory antique satin and a paradise plume, and very charming it looks. Sable toques are charming when they are properly treated, but the most becoming fashion of trimming them is with bunches of Neapolitan violets. This, however, was a fancy which obtained among us last year, and so I suppose I must not advocate its best delights. Coloured chiffon scarves and rosettes look nice on sable toques, and a chinchilla toque which I encountered smiling on me from a shop window yesterday was most effectively trimmed with a group of red roses and green leaves. The only rival in my affections to the sable toque is one of embroidered velvet, of a bright violet tone, traced with jet, with three black feathers placed at one side. I met a girl the other day in Bond Street looking so absolutely charming under the influence of this, that I yearned to run after her and demand her life or the address of her milliner.

The newest hats have their crowns entirely made of flowers and leaves, and these are all shaped with straight brims, to be worn well forward over the eyes, turned up at the back, trimmed with rosettes or a large bow of velvet.

Fashion at the moment may well be as obscure as the atmosphere. Save in the evening time, it is of little consequence what we wear, so that the fur collar extend to the tip of our noses, and the outline of the skirt shows a gracious inclination to extend at the feet and fit closely at the knees.

WEDNESDAY: I am so tired of all my relations. I have dined and lunched, and tea'd and breakfasted with them every day for the last week. This advertised time of peace and goodwill provokes me to pugnacity. I feel desperately inclined to contradict everything everybody says, and am not quite certain that the consumption of eleven plates of turkey, and as many plates of plum-pudding, is conducive to the best appreciation of your dearest friends. For the last few days we have had lunch parties of the family, dinner parties of the family, and after them all have the men gathered round the card table, while the women have sat round the fire, displaying their latest petticoats and talking of their latest lovers with equal candour.

Trixie, who has returned from Paris to join the festivities, has brought with her a petticoat of vast superiority, made of glacé, with half a dozen frills on the hem, each one showing an insertion of lace bows. This in pale pink, with the bows in black, is luxurious to a degree, and calculated to arouse in any but the best women a feeling of envy. She has also brought with her—a fact which she betrayed liberally at the same time—a pair of black silk stockings, with real white Valenciennes lace

insertions. These she wears with black satin shoes, traced with true lovers' knots in jet, and to-night completed the general effect by a jet gown with folds of white tulle in the décolletage, decked with many diamonds and pearls. She wore in her hair an ornament, also a product of Paris, made of a black gauze bow, closely studded with diamonds, with a white osprey at the back. She really looked remarkably smart, and seemed comfortable, too; and to be able to lounge at your ease in a dress in which you look absolutely elegant is a luxury denied to most of us. Dress-makers have an unpleasant habit of feeling they have done their best duty by you when they have put you into a bodice exactly half-an-inch too small.

"O's for a touch of that vanished inch,
And the feel of a bone far away."

I always feel inclined to observe poetically when I am being laced into my best frocks. It is no use trying to persuade your



BROCADE WITH LACE COLLAR AND CHINCHILLA YOKE AND BORDERS.

modiste that you are satisfied with the twenty-two inch waist that Providence has accorded you; she does not believe it, and will triumphantly take you in at each seam, whether you consider such conduct goodly or not.

One of the girls to-night had on a really charming dress of Liberty satin, traced with jet and chenille. The



AN EMBROIDERED VELVET TOQUE.

satin was of pale green, the chenille a little darker, and the jet was interspersed with pearls. The body was of chiffon, with straps of the embroidery just coming down the back over the bust and falling into the waist. She wore a bunch of roses at one side, and her short sleeves were formed of chiffon and glistening embroidery, and in her hair a bow of chiffon was fastened with a diamond ornament. She was going on to a ball afterwards—a programme in which I should like to have joined her, but I was dedicated to mere gossip, while she was to trip the light fantastic toe, which she had clad to perfection in pale green stockings and satin shoes to match. I like women to attend to these little details. I like them, indeed, to commit every possible extravagance the laws of La Mode permit.

IN THE GARDEN.

THE ROCK CRESSES (ARABIS).

FEW rock garden plants are better known than the Arabises, or Rock Cresses, as they are popularly called. The most familiar is *Arabis albidula*, the White Rock Cress, which is displayed on many a hawker's barrow in spring, when the dense growth is hidden with masses of white flowers. This *Arabis* is so rampant in growth that care must be taken to prevent it smothering less vigorous subjects. It will succeed in any soil and position, making, with the purple *Aubrietias* and yellow *Alyssum*, suitable plants for a margin to broad borders, or to cover the rougher parts of the rock garden. The writer likes to see the Arabises hanging over a rocky ledge, as if on their native slopes. There is a variegated variety which is of bright colour, more decided and pleasant than the majority of variegated leaved plants. It is not wise, however, to use coloured leaved things too freely, otherwise the effect is blotchy. In *A. blepharophylla* the flowers are purple, but this is not a very satisfactory kind as regards growth. *A. procurrens*, the pretty variegated variety of it, and *A. lucida*, are also interesting. Perhaps the prettiest variegated Rock Cress is the form of *A. lucida*. *A. montana*, the kind illustrated, is less unruly than many members of the family, more compact, and quite as free in bloom, the bold, pure white flowers smothering the growth.

SOME ORNAMENTAL CRABS.

At this season of the year our attention is directed to the beauty of the Crab Apple in fruit. We seldom find in English gardens that the trees and shrubs welcome for the beauty of their flowers or fruit are adequately represented. This is especially the case in regard to the Crabs, which are not only graceful in growth, but attractive in the spring through a wealth of charming flowers, followed by crimson fruits to colour the autumn and early winter. The changing leaf tints of autumn have their charm too, bronzy green, crimson, brown, and similar rich hues mingling together.

THE CHINESE CRAB.

This has been long introduced into our gardens, but few have thought of planting it. Evergreens—laurels, privet, and so forth—have apparently overshadowed everything else. A tree of the Chinese Crab on the outskirts of the lawn will give pleasure throughout the year. It is rather a strong-growing tree, reaching in good soil and situation a height of 25 ft. The flowers are semi-double, of a pretty pink shade, but deeper in the bud. *Kaido* is one of the most pleasing varieties.

OTHER PRETTY CRABS.

The Japanese Crab (*Pyrus Toringo*) is quite a shrub, spreading in growth, the flowers small, pink, and succeeded by clusters of fruit. The Sibirian Crabs are very handsome trees. They are conspicuous for free graceful outline, the branches smothered with flowers in spring, and in autumn with large crimson fruits. The Dartmouth Crab is very showy, and note may also be made of such fine kinds as the Fairy and John Downie. There is no more labour in planting these beautiful Crabs than in filling the garden with wretched Conifers, Araucarias, and similar shrubs that fill the place, producing throughout the year a monotonous effect.

THE CHINESE PRIMROSE.

Few winter greenhouse flowers are brighter in colour than *Primula sinensis*, the Chinese relative of our yellow Primrose. One has only to compare the two forms to see the relationship. During recent years the race has been greatly improved by fertilising the finest types and seeking out any kind that showed an advance upon existing varieties. We have now plants of compact habit, varied in the form of leaf, and with flowers ranging from purest white to richest crimson. It is only within recent years that a blue shade has been obtained. At first the Blue Primrose, as it was rather fancifully called, was very poor—an unsatisfactory shade, without decision or beauty. Present-day varieties, if not the blue of the Gentian, are rich, and in the double kinds of much charm. The semi-doubles are a delightful class, less difficult to manage than the true double-flowered varieties, and very free. Almost as many shades of colour are represented amongst them as in the single Primulas.

CULTURE OF CHINESE PRIMROSES.

The plants are not difficult to grow. The double varieties need more care, requiring a higher temperature, being also more subject to damping off than the singles. As the flowers are in full beauty now, this is an excellent time to draw attention to the culture of the plants. The single Primulas, which we advise those who have not yet attempted *Primula* growing to start with, should be raised from seed in April, making a sowing, too, during the two following months. A useful succession of plants is thus obtained, and the flowering season much prolonged. Use for the seed pan, soil composed of two parts turfy loam, and one part each of leaf-mould and well-decayed cow manure, adding a dash of sharp silver sand to lighten it. This compost should be passed through a fine sieve, placing the coarser parts at the bottom of the pan, which should be well drained. Make the surface perfectly level and firm, water well through a fine rose, and sow the seed very finely. Some growers do not cover the seeds, but a very light dusting of dry cocoanut-fibre refuse, shaken over the pan and allowed to fall through a fine sieve held a foot or two above, is an excellent covering. Place a sheet of glass over the pan, and keep dark in a greenhouse temperature upon a cool surface. As the seed germinates, gradually admit light and air. When time has passed, and the seedlings have appeared, pot them off as soon as they can be handled into small pots known as "thumbs." Keep them

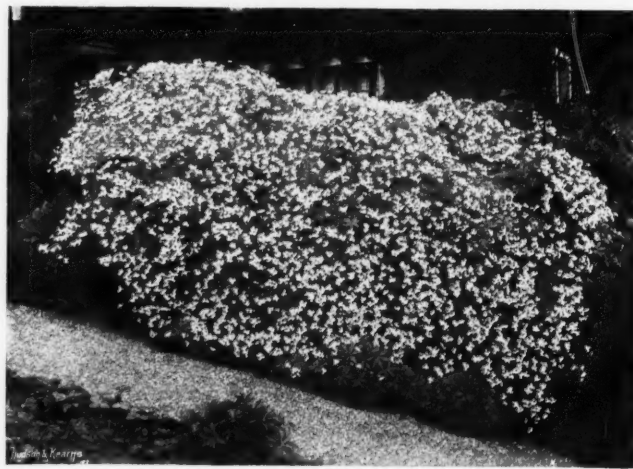


Photo. THE MOUNTAIN ROCK CRESS (*Arabis montana*). C. Metcalfe.

close to the glass, and transfer them into 5 in. or 5½ in. pots when roots appear through the drainage hole. After potting give a sprinkling of water, shading and keeping close for a few days until the plants have fully recovered. A hot sun shining directly upon them or dryness of the soil will mean collapse. Keep the plants in the cool frame or pit until the end of September, when bring them into a temperature of between 50 deg. and 60 deg. Place them close to the glass, and if possible make a shallow tray of the shelf, putting in a layer of cocoanut-fibre refuse, to minimise as much as possible all risk of danger from drought. An excellent compost is the same as that recommended for the seed pans, but in that for the final potting put a little more dry and old cow dung. Pot firmly, and the soil when used should be fairly moist. When the flower spikes appear, give a little weak liquid manure, to develop both flowers and foliage. Fortunately insect pests care little for the plants, which are even free from them when other things in the same house are attacked.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We gladly help readers desirous of information about gardening in any of its branches. Nurserymen are also invited to send their catalogues for notice.